

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE MEDIEVAL TOWNS OF SOUTHWEST WALES

ADPAR



Near vertical 1987 aerial photograph of Adpar (DAT87-140-32)

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By

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ADPAR

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Anglo-Normans built a motte and bailey castle at Adpar on the north bank of the River Teifi in the early twelfth century and a settlement soon developed around it. In the late thirteenth century, the settlement was organised along burghal lines with a weekly market and three annual fairs. In 1326, 96 burgesses were recorded. Adpar rapidly declined and was nothing more than a village by the end of the medieval period. Nothing survives to indicate its former importance.

KEY FACTS

Status: weekly market and three annual fairs.

Size: 1326 96 burgesses.

Archaeology: Features associated with the castle recorded in an evaluation.

LOCATION

Adpar lies on the north bank of the River Teifi (Fig. 1) in Ceredigion (SN 309 409). Newcastle Emlyn occupies the south bank in Carmarthenshire. The Teifi valley provides a good route-way, to Cardigan and the coast to the west and into mid-Wales to the east. Roads lead over high ground to the south to Carmarthen and to the north to Aberystwyth and beyond.

HISTORY

The Anglo-Normans were probably responsible for building a motte and bailey castle on the north bank of the River Teifi at Adpar (called Atpar in some historic documents) during their brief occupation of Ceredigion in the early twelfth century. There is no history associated with the castle. It is likely a settlement developed organically outside the castle during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The later history of Adpar is bound with that of Newcastle Emlyn on the south bank of the river where a castle was founded in c.1240 and a town in 1303. A bridge across the Teifi between Adpar and Newcastle Emlyn was in existence by 1257.

Adpar was a possession of the Bishop of St Davids and in the late thirteenth century Bishop Bek reorganised an existing Welsh settlement on burghal tenure lines: the names of early burgesses were predominantly Welsh. Adpar was granted the right to hold a weekly market and three annual fairs. In 1326 96 burgesses were recorded, a substantial town for the period. One individual, Griffith Vachuan, held numerous burgages, several individuals held burgages in both Adpar and Newcastle Emlyn and 15½ burgages were in the bishops' hands for lack of tenants – Adpar was not thriving.

There is no record of a church at Adpar (it was formerly in the parish of Llandisiliogogo, but by the nineteenth century it was in the parish of Llandyfriog), although Evans notes priests are recorded ministering to the burgess, which may be an indication of at least a chapel in the town.

The later medieval history of Adpar has not been researched; little documentary evidence survives as much was lost in a fire of 1752. The European-wide population crash of the mid-fourteenth century and the foundation of Newcastle Emlyn on the opposite bank of the Teifi must have had an impact on Adpar's development. It is probable that in the later medieval period Adpar had effectively ceased to function as a town, as in 1536 properties in Adpar were in the hands of a few small estates. A drawing made during the first Duke of Beaufort's tour through Wales in 1684 clearly shows Adpar motte, the bridge over the Teifi and Newcastle Emlyn castle, with tents pitched in what would have been the former town. Only one small building is shown. In 1741 it was stripped of its borough status (although it never seems to have been awarded a charter).

Saterday Aug.9, 84. This morning the Duke of Beaufort went hence to the other side the River which washeth the founds of Castle Emblem or new Castle in Emlyn and parts the two Counties of Carmarthen and Cardigan, to view the Militia of the latter 13 English miles from hence. Where his Grace having seen then exercise. The Earl of Worcester, Sr John Talbot Syr Ryce Williams and the rest of the company were sumptuously entertained in fair blue and white Tents pitcht on purpose. Where also stands were made for an hundred horse, fenced with boughs of trees, & where provendure and hay was layd in for them. After which refreshment his Grace and company returned that night to Caermarden the troop of which county waited in the village below on ye other side the river to relieve the Carediganffhire horse and conduct his Grace and company again hither.



*C. The Ruines of New castle Emlyn being by 10 S. E. of Caerbery
A River Tivy
R. A Bridge at y^e foot of 2 ascents, ye one end whereof mounts into Cardiganffhire, ye other into Carmarthenshire
Astrany East of hoular
In 1684 the Duke of Beaufort
R. A. G. G. G.
Tivy: Lat.
BEAVER: Eng.
Aranc: Brytish.
GERALDUS in ITINER.*

- C. The ruines of Newcastle Emlyn belonging to ye Earl of Carbery.
- A. River Tivy.
- R. A Bridge at ye foot of 2 ascents, ye one end whereof mounts into Cardiganshire, ye other into Carmarthenshire.

1684 drawing showing Adpar motte with Newcastle Emlyn castle in the background. Note what seems to be just a single building in Adpar.

MORPHOLOGY

There is nothing now to indicate the former importance of Adpar. Apart from the motte no medieval elements are detectable in what is now a village with much modern housing to the north and the northwest. The main road through the village, the B4571, runs from the bridge over the Teifi to the north up a fairly steep valley side. The A475, which runs from the east alongside the river to the bridge, was constructed after 1844 as it is not shown on the parish tithe map. The road running west from the bridge, the B4333, along Lloyd Terrace (Fig. 3), may also be a recent routeway, as an 1811 map by Thomas Budgen in the British Library depicts it as a cul-de-sac. The original east/west route through Adpar is shown on the tithe map (Fig. 2) with a crossroad in the centre of the settlement.

The medieval motte lies on the east side of the north/south road through the village, 60m to the north of the bridge. Evidence revealed in an archaeological evaluation suggests a bailey may have been located to the north of the motte. The long narrow properties on both sides of Lloyd Terrace shown on the 1889 Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 3) led Soubly to believe these were medieval burgage plots, but an examination of the earlier maps shows they were laid out in the mid-nineteenth century. The location of the properties held by the 96 burgesses in 1326 is unclear, but it is most likely that they clustered around the bridgehead and on both sides of the north/south road and alongside minor roads (Fig. 7).

BUILDINGS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS

Scheduled Monuments

There are two scheduled monuments in Adpar: the medieval motte -CD104 -and the post-medieval bridge over the River Teifi - CM087 -(Fig. 5). The bridge is also a listed building.

Listed Buildings

There are two listed building in Adpar, the bridge over the River Teifi, listed grade II*, which is also a scheduled monument, and Ivory House (formerly The Nag's Head), an early nineteenth century building, listed grade II (Fig. 5).

Conservation Area

The whole of the historic core of Adpar lies in the Adpar Conservation Area (Fig. 5).

Registered Parks and Gardens

There are no registered parks and gardens in Adpar.

Registered Historic Landscape

Adpar is not in a registered historic landscape.

Undesignated Historic Environment Assets

Apart from the scheduled motte, the scheduled/listed bridge and the listed Ivory House there are six other sites recorded on the Dyfed Historic Environment Record: four post-medieval buildings, Cilgwyn park and garden, and a toll road (Fig. 5).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

Included in this section are excavations, evaluation excavations and watching briefs. Building surveys and desk-top assessments are not included unless they add to the known archaeology (Fig. 6).

1. An archaeological evaluation consisting of three trenches was undertaken in land belonging to Ivory House, immediately to the north of Adpar motte. A 4m wide 0.75m deep ditch was revealed in two of the trenches. Pottery from it ranged from the twelfth-fourteenth centuries to the eighteenth century. The excavators considered this ditch was associated with the castle, being infilled in the eighteenth century. Other features included two-postholes, a timber slot and a stone surface. One of the postholes and the slot are likely to be medieval in date. It was considered likely that some of these features lay in a bailey to the north of the motte. Reference: Jones 2009 (97120).



Plan of the Ivory House excavation trenches



Photographs of the Ivory House evaluation

2. The remains of a 'stone-lined chamber' were recorded in a garden to the rear of a house called 'The Box' in 1998 following small-scale excavations by the owner. The function of the chamber was not ascertained, but it was considered most likely to be a drain or water course associated with the medieval/post-medieval Cilgwyn Mansion. Reference: Page and Scott 1998 (35706).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

Adpar has some potential for addressing some of the key agenda items for research into the medieval period, including town plantation and castle building. It also has the potential to address post-medieval research theme on settlements (towns).

The evaluation at Ivory House demonstrated that archaeological deposits associated with the castle survive, although the built-up nature of the landscape around the motte means that opportunities for investigation are limited. Similarly much of the historic core consists of nineteenth century and later domestic and commercial buildings and so opportunities are limited. Archaeological deposits associated with the medieval town may survive on undeveloped land 100m to 200m to the north of the motte, but this has not been tested.

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Soulsby I and Jones D 1976. The archaeological implications of redevelopment in the historic towns of Ceredigion District, Urban Research Unit Department of Archaeology University College Cardiff unpublished report.

Databases and online references

Dyfed Historic Environment Record <https://www.archwilio.org.uk/arch/>

Cof Cymru <https://cadw.gov.wales/advice-support/cof-cymru>

Coflein <https://coflein.gov.uk/en>

LiDAR <https://lle.gov.wales/catalogue/item/LidarCompositeDataset/?lang=en>

Research framework for the Archaeology of Wales

<https://www.archaeoleg.org.uk/areasouthwest.html>

<http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/ordsurvdraw/n/002osd00000021u00144000.html>



Figure 1. Location map.

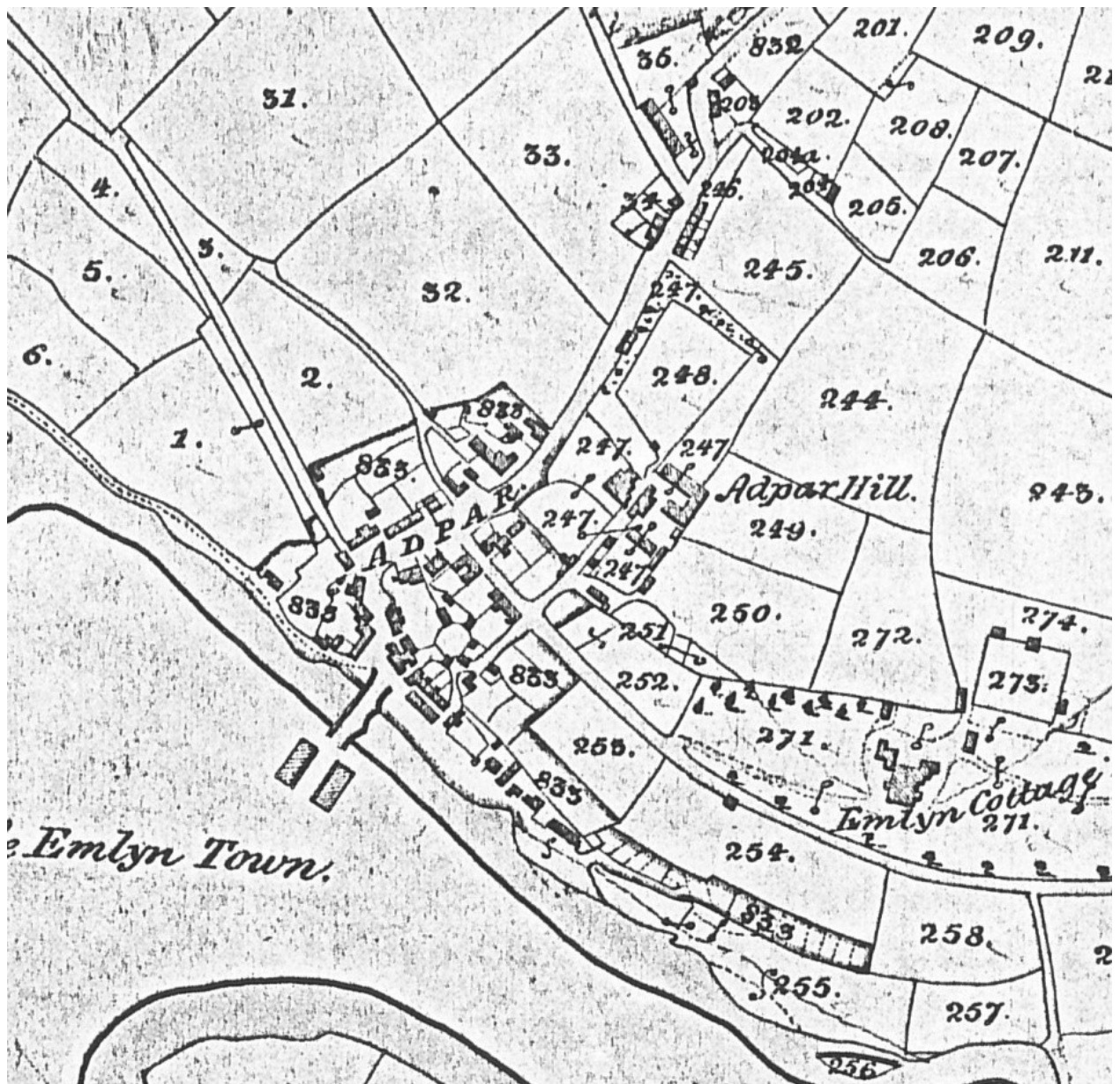


Figure 2. Extract from the 1844 Llandyfriog tithe map



Figure 3. Extract from the 1889 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 1st Edition map showing Adpar on the north side of the River Teifi and Newcastle Emllyn on the south side (Cardiganshire 45.02).



Figure 4. Modern Ordnance Survey map showing Adpar and Newcastle Emlyn.

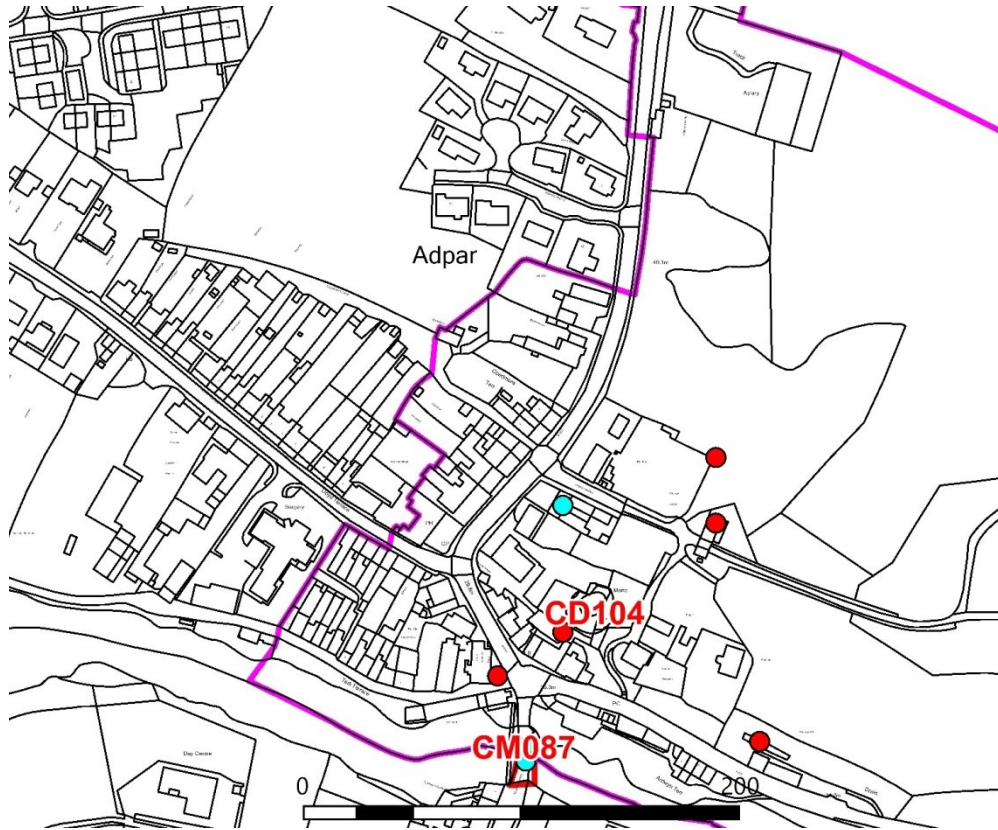


Figure 5. Listed buildings (blue circles), scheduled monument (red numbering), HER sites (red dots) and the conservation area (purple outline).

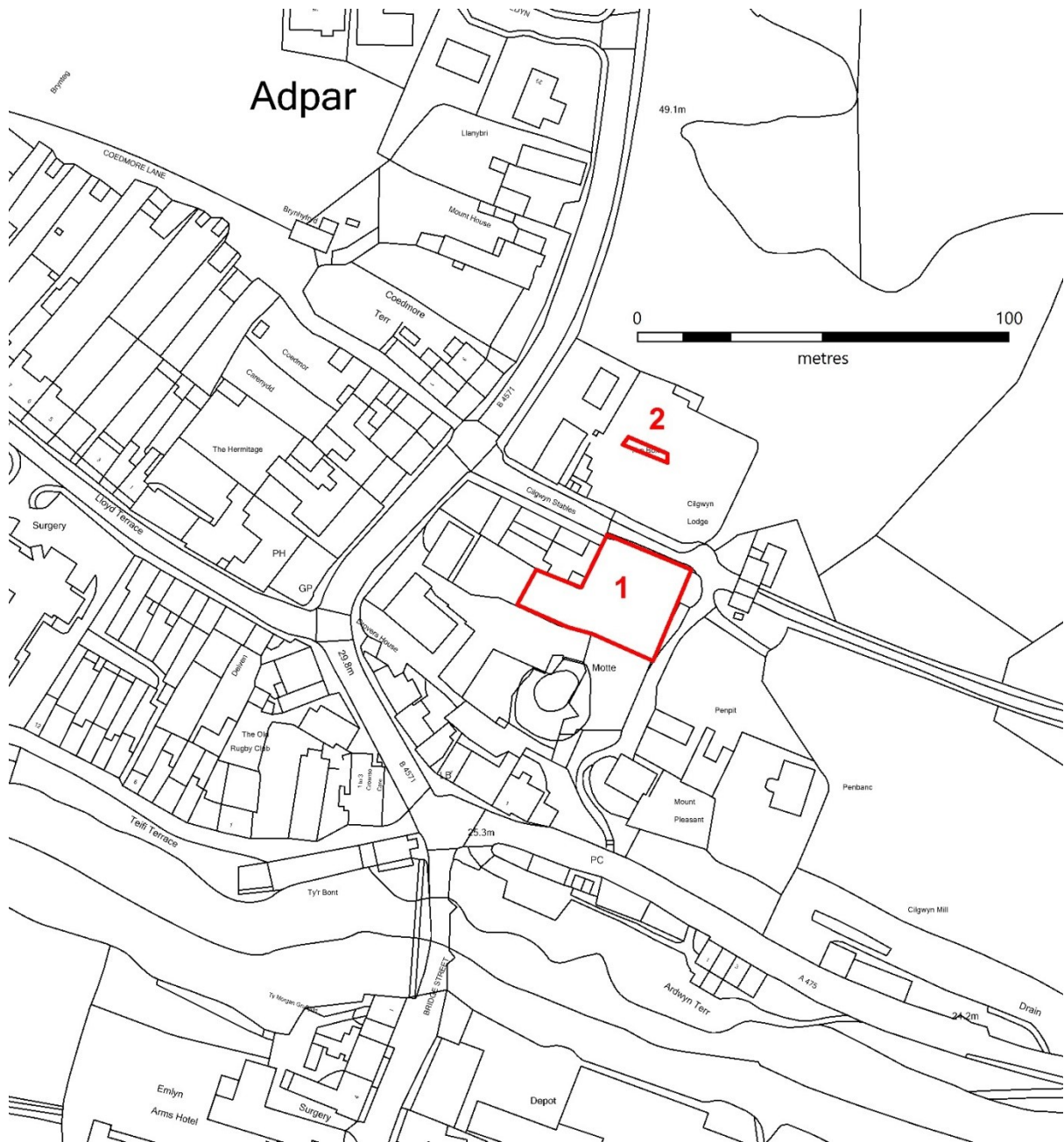


Figure 6. Archaeological interventions

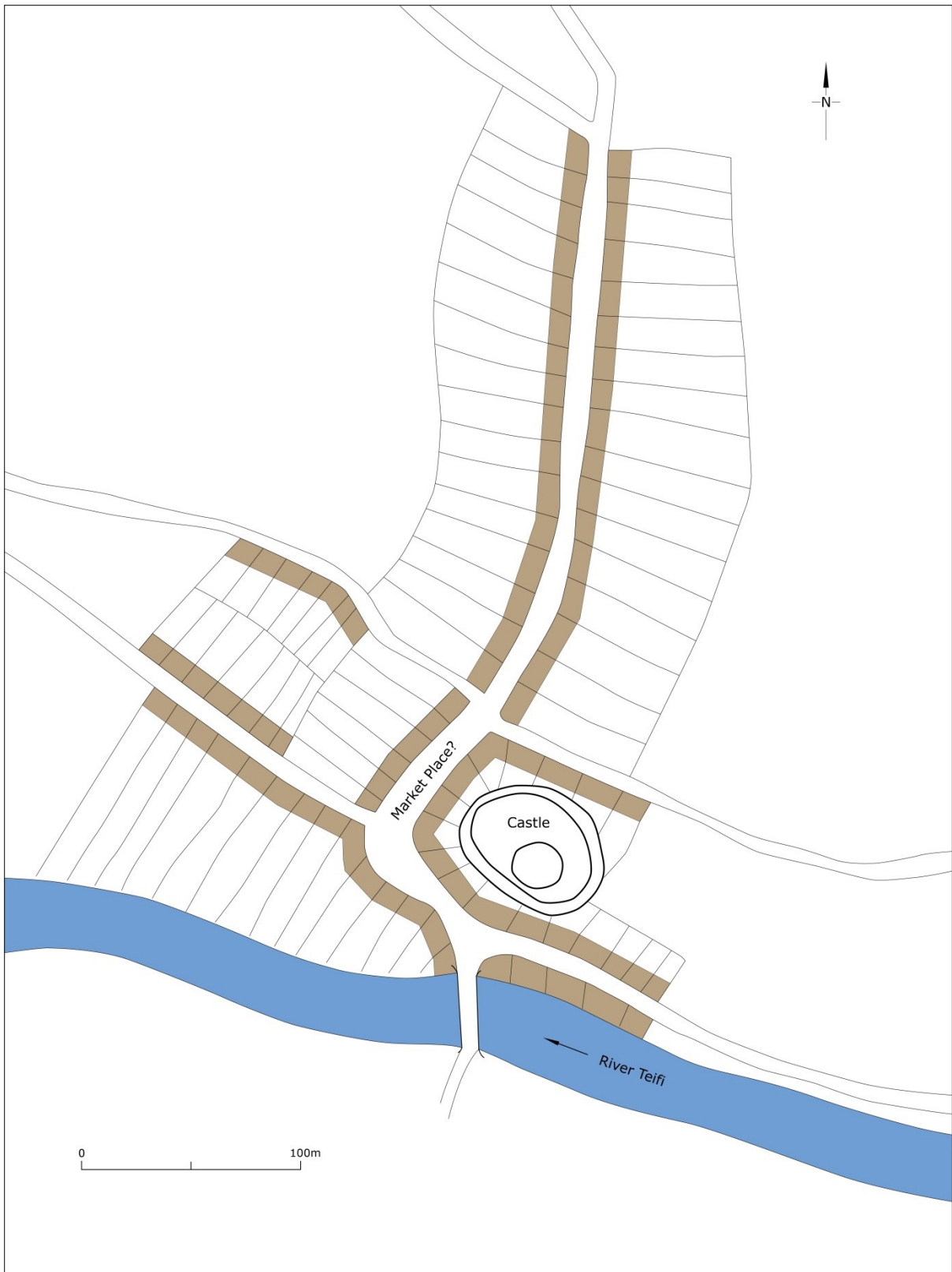


Figure 6. Map showing Adpar as it may have been at its maximum extent in the medieval period c.1320.