

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Cusworth Motte Castle

PARISH: SPROTBROUGH AND CUSWORTH

DISTRICT: DONCASTER

COUNTY: SOUTH YORKSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 13253

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SE54180334

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

Cusworth motte castle lies in woodland adjacent the A1(M) at what was once the south-west edge of Cusworth Park. It comprises an oval motte, 20m wide west-east and 23.5m wide north-south. The motte stands c.5m above a dry ditch, c.2m deep and c.6m wide and partially filled in to the east. The castle was built in the eleventh century by either William de Warenne or Roger de Busli, both of whom were granted lands at Cusworth by William the Conqueror. In the later middle ages it was part of the Honour of Conisbrough, held by the de Warennes. In the eighteenth century, or some time earlier, the site was superseded by that of Cusworth Hall, 700m to the north-east.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Motte castles are medieval fortifications introduced into Britain by the Normans. They comprised a large conical mound of earth or rubble, the motte, surmounted by a palisade and a stone or timber tower. In a majority of examples an embanked enclosure containing additional buildings, the bailey, adjoined the motte. Motte castles and motte-and-bailey castles acted as garrison forts during offensive military operations, as strongholds, and, in many cases, as aristocratic residences and as centres of local or royal administration. Built in towns, villages and open countryside, motte castles generally occupied strategic positions dominating their immediate locality and, as a result, are the most visually impressive monuments of the early post-Conquest period surviving in the modern landscape. Over 600 motte castles and motte-and-bailey castles are recorded nationally, with examples known from most regions. Some 100-150 examples do not have baileys and are classified as motte castles. As one of a restricted range of recognised early post-Conquest monuments, they are particularly important for the study of Norman Britain and the development of the feudal system. Although many were occupied for only a short period of time, motte castles continued to be built and occupied from the 11th to the 13th centuries, after which they were superseded by other types of castle.

Cusworth motte castle is a particularly important example owing to its good state of survival and the preservation of extensive archaeological deposits.

SCHEDULING HISTORY

The monument was included in the Schedule on 27 Jun 1962 as:
MONUMENT NAME: Cusworth Castle Mound
COUNTY/NAME: South Yorkshire 550

The reference of this monument is now:
NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 13253
NAME: Cusworth Motte Castle

SCHEDULING AFFIRMED ON 08th March 1991