

## EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Quadrangular castle at Beverston

PARISH: BEVERSTONE

DISTRICT: COTSWOLD

COUNTY: GLOUCESTERSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 22881

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): ST86169395

### DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes a quadrangular castle set on level ground 50m south of St Mary's Church at Beverston, in an area of the Cotswold Hills. The castle includes medieval, post-medieval and modern components and is partially occupied. Some areas of the castle survive largely in their original medieval form, while others are now occupied by more recent structures. Those parts of the castle which survive as upstanding masonry are Listed Grade I.

The western wing, which remains unoccupied, constitutes the best surviving section of the original castle. This survives as a three storey building attached to a rectangular corner tower at each end. The southern range is now largely occupied by an 18th century house, built of rubble with a Cotswold stone roof, while in the east the only upstanding remains are those of the gatehouse. The former northern wing has been replaced by modern structures. The monument has a well recorded history of construction. The earliest surviving parts of the castle relate to the fortifications developed by Maurice de Gaunt who purchased the site in around 1225; by c.1229 a roughly pentagonal castle had been constructed without licence. This structure was associated with round towers and a twin tower gatehouse. In 1873 the footings of a circular tower 8m in diameter were uncovered within the rectory garden outside the moat on the western side of the monument. These have not been located precisely, but are likely to relate to the fortifications of the early castle.

In 1330 Thomas Lord Berkeley is known to have purchased the site and redeveloped its fortifications. This period witnessed the addition of a large square south western tower with a vaulted basement and an integral chapel, together with the associated domestic block and the eastern gatehouse. The surrounding ditch was constructed during this period and there was an external drawbridge leading to the gatehouse. The smaller north western tower is likely to have been constructed during the 15th century.

The redevelopment of the castle was completed during the 15th century and it eventually took a quadrangular form, with four corner towers, a barbican and gatehouse arranged around a central courtyard and surrounded by an external ditch. The courtyard survives as an open area to the west of the gatehouse with dimensions of 28m by 15m. The surrounding ditch remains visible on the western and southern sides of the monument. On the western side the ditch is an earthwork 10m wide and up to c.4m deep and on the southern side it is visible as a terrace within a landscaped garden. Elsewhere the ditch has become infilled, although it survives as a buried feature c.10m wide.

The house, which now occupies the southern range of the castle, dates to around 1791. This overlies the site of the former 13th century hall which was destroyed by fire during the early 17th century and itself replaced by another farmhouse also destroyed by fire prior to 1791.

The castle does not occupy a particularly good defensive position and is likely to have been of strategic importance because of its proximity to the main Bristol to Gloucester road which lies c.100m to the south. The site was twice besieged in 1664, during the Civil War, before being taken by the Parliamentarians.

The structures comprising the western area of the castle, including the towers and intermediate domestic block which are Listed Grade I and the eastern gatehouse also Listed Grade I, are included. All structures which are permanently occupied are excluded from the scheduling. These include the structure adjacent to the eastern side of the castle building and the structures to the north and south of the central courtyard; the underlying ground is, however, included. The metalled surfaces in the courtyard are also excluded, as is the footbridge, although the underlying ground is included.

## ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

A quadrangular castle is a strongly fortified residence built of stone, or sometimes brick, around a square or rectangular courtyard. The outer walls formed a defensive line, frequently with towers sited on the corners and occasionally in intermediate positions as well. Some of the very strongly defended examples have additional external walls. Ditches, normally wet but sometimes dry, were also found outside the walls. Two main types of quadrangular castle have been identified. In the southern type, the angle and intermediate mural towers were most often round in plan and projected markedly from the enclosing wall. In the northern type, square angle towers, often of massive proportions, were constructed, these projecting only slightly from the main wall. Within the castle, accommodation was provided in the towers or in buildings set against the walls which opened onto the central courtyard. An important feature of quadrangular castles was that they were planned and built to an integrated, often symmetrical, design. Once built, therefore, they did not lend themselves easily to modification. The earliest and finest examples of this class of castle are found in Wales, dating from 1277, but they also began to appear in England at the same time. Most examples were built in the 14th century but the tradition extended into the 15th century. Later examples demonstrate an increasing emphasis on domestic comfort to the detriment of defence and, indeed, some late examples are virtually defenceless. They provided residences for the king or leading families and occur in both rural and urban situations. Quadrangular castles are widely dispersed throughout England with a slight concentration in Kent and Sussex protecting a vulnerable coastline and routes to London. Other concentrations are found in the north near the Scottish border and also in the west on the Welsh border. They are rare nationally with only 64 recorded examples of which 44 are of southern type and 20 are of northern type. Considerable diversity of form is exhibited with no two examples being exactly alike. With other types of castle, they are major medieval monument types which, belonging to the highest levels of society, frequently acted as major administrative centres and formed the foci for developing settlement patterns. Castles generally provide an emotive and evocative link to the past and can provide a valuable educational resource, both with respect to medieval warfare and defence, and to wider aspects of medieval society. All examples retaining significant remains of medieval date are considered to be of national importance.

The quadrangular castle at Beverston survives in part in its original medieval form and will contain archaeological and environmental evidence relating to the monument and the landscape in which it was constructed. The monument, which represents one of only two such sites known in Gloucestershire

offers an insight into the structure of medieval society in this area and the nature of the local economy. The location of the monument will also have exerted a strong influence over the development of the local settlement pattern.

#### SCHEDULING HISTORY

Monument's inclusion in the Schedule was confirmed on 9th October 1981.

Monument included as:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Gloucestershire 75

NAME: Beverston Castle

The reference of this monument is now:

NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 22881

NAME: Quadrangular castle at Beverston

SCHEDULING REVISED ON 08th August 1994