

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Motte and bailey castle 90m west of St Mary Magdalene's Church, Quatford

PARISH: BRIDGNORTH

DISTRICT: BRIDGNORTH

COUNTY: SHROPSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 32322

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SO73789073

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes the earthwork and buried remains of a motte and bailey castle, occupying a commanding position over the valley of the River Severn and with extensive views of the uplands to the west. It is recorded in the Domesday survey that the fortified borough and the 'new house' (considered to be the castle) at Quatford had been built by Roger de Montgomery. In 1086 he founded the former collegiate church of St Mary Magdalene, which is located a short distance to the east of the castle. A documentary source records that the 'oppidum de Quatford' (the settlement of Quatford) was transferred to Bridgnorth in 1101-02.

The flat-topped, steep-sided D-shaped motte stands about 9m high and measures approximately 35m by 50m at its base and 11m across the top. It was constructed next to a vertical cliff above the River Severn and is bounded on its eastern side by a 3m deep rock-cut ditch, which separates it from the bailey. The ditch was excavated in 1830-31 and produced a variety of finds, including a penny of Henry I (1068-1135). Old excavation trenches, 2m wide, for which no archaeological records survive, cut across the top of the motte. The bailey, about 0.5ha in area, occupies a low ridge with the ground falling away to the north and south. It is defined on its northern and southern sides by well-defined scarps, approximately 2m and 1.3m in height respectively, which were created by cutting into the natural slopes. The western end of the southern scarp is surmounted by a short bank to the south of which, continuing the line of the scarp, is a short ditch. The eastern side of the bailey has been cut into by a modern road. An archaeological excavation, undertaken in 1960 prior to the widening of the road, failed to locate any original defences defining the eastern side of the bailey. Numerous post holes were found during the investigation marking the positions of wooden structures which were probably used for storage or keeping livestock. Evidence from the excavation suggests that these structures were short-lived and helps to support the historical evidence that the site was abandoned by 1102 when Robert de Belmese established his castle at Bridgnorth, 6km to the north west. This is the subject of a separate scheduling.

All fences, gates and stiles, the water trough and fodder container, and the timber hut to the south of the motte are excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath them is included.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Motte and bailey 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 and bailey 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 or motte-and-bailey castles are recorded nationally, with examples known from most regions. 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.

The motte and bailey castle 90m west of St Mary Magdalene's Church at Quatford is a well-preserved example of this class of monument, despite the later modification to the eastern part of the bailey by road widening.

Archaeological excavation of this part of the bailey has revealed that the castle will retain structural and artefactual remains and associated deposits dating from the 12th century onwards. The excavation of the ditch between the motte and bailey also produced artefacts which can be attributed to the initial occupation of the castle.

Documentary sources provide valuable information about the castle's establishment and its abandonment. The importance of the monument is further enhanced by its association with the former collegiate church of St Mary Magdalene. The monument remains a prominent feature within the landscape.

SCHEDULING HISTORY

Monument included in the Schedule on 5th February 1955 as:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Shropshire 187

NAME: Motte and bailey castle, Quatford

The reference of this monument is now:

NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 32322

NAME: Motte and bailey castle 90m west of St Mary Magdalene's Church, Quatford

SCHEDULING REVISED ON 07th June 2000