

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Moated enclosures, Well Wood and Chapel Wood, Watton-At-Stone

PARISH: WATTON-AT-STONE

DISTRICT: EAST HERTFORDSHIRE

COUNTY: HERTFORDSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 11523

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): TL28271889

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes the remains of a medieval moated enclosure next to a contemporary non-moated enclosure of high religious status. The Well Wood moated site consists of an irregular rectangular enclosure orientated NE-SW and measuring 175m by 90m in overall dimension including the 10 m wide moat. There is an inner bank which survives in places up to a height of 2.5m. There appears to be an entrance causeway on the SW side. No internal earthworks are visible although oyster shells and medieval pottery have been noted in the centre of the island suggesting (earlier) occupation.

Immediately to the south of the moat is the Chapel Wood site. This monument includes the remains of a double enclosure with a small chapel standing in the middle of it. The outer enclosure is triangular in shape with its longest side measuring 270m. It consists of a dry ditch 5m wide with an internal bank 1m high. There is an entrance on the NW side opposite the entrance to the second inner enclosure. The latter is subrectangular in form measuring some 50m by 65m with an inner bank and ditch of similar shape and size to the external earthwork. The entrance to the inner enclosure is through slightly inturned earthworks which lead to the remains of a small stone faced chapel which has been partly excavated. Only a few pieces of masonry and a low hump mark the remains of the Chapel. Finds of imported stonework indicate this to be a very high status ecclesiastical site.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Around 6000 moated sites are known in England. They consist of wide ditches, often or seasonally water-filled, partly or completely enclosing one or more islands of dry ground on which stood domestic or religious buildings or, in some cases, which were used for horticulture. The peak period during which moated sites were built was between about 1250 and 1350 and by far the greatest concentration lies in central and eastern parts of England. However, moated sites were built throughout the medieval period, are widely scattered throughout England, and exhibit a high level of diversity in their forms and sizes. They form a significant class of medieval monument and are important for the understanding of the distribution of wealth and status in the countryside. Many examples provide conditions favourable to the survival

of organic remains.

This moated site with its associated triangular enclosure is highly unusual for its class. The Well Wood site is made unusual through its association with the Chapel Wood site. Imported Caen stone ware indicates that the Chapel was not merely an ancillary place of worship but that it was a religious site of major significance, reflecting the wealth and status of the landowner. Both sites demonstrate the high potential for the survival of archaeological remains.

SCHEDULING HISTORY

The monument was originally included in the Schedule on 5th January 1976 as:

MONUMENT NAME: Earthworks in Chapel Wood and Well Wood

COUNTY NUMBER: Hertfordshire 99

The reference of this monument is now:

NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 11523

NAME: Moated enclosures, Well Wood and Chapel Wood, Watton-At-Stone

SCHEDULING AFFIRMED ON 19th March 1991