

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Hallsteads moated site, Grimethorpe

PARISH: BRIERLEY

DISTRICT: BARNESLEY

COUNTY: SOUTH YORKSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 13233

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SE42070933

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

Hallsteads is an unusual site consisting of a flat-topped rise between two narrow valleys. A dam built to the west of the rise, across the confluence of the valleys, has created a moat to north and south while a bank and ditch encloses the site to the east. Within the enclosure, c.120m across, the hillside has been scarped to provide a roughly circular inner enclosure. In the past this carried a stone wall, the remains of which have been located during ploughing and stone from which litters the northern arm of the moat. Writing in 1831, Hunter states "there were lately those who remembered walls of four or five feet in height, and as much in thickness" indicating that a substantial stone-built building once inhabited the summit. In addition, running eastward off the north arm of the moat for c.150m is a line of three or four linear fishponds, divided by dams and created by embanking the natural stream line. All modern features within the constraint area, including hedging, fencing and a disconnected telegraph pole, are excluded from the scheduling although the ground beneath is included.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Around 6,000 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. In some cases the islands were used for horticulture. The majority of moated sites served as prestigious aristocratic and seigneurial residences with the provision of a moat intended as a status symbol rather than a practical military defence. 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.

Hallsteads is an important and unusual example of its class and possesses a particularly fine set of associated fishponds. In addition, although being damaged by ploughing, building and wall foundations survive on the island and organic material will be preserved in the waterlogged areas of the moat.

MONUMENT INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULE ON 19th June 1991