

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Shocklach Castle motte and moated enclosure

PARISH: CALDECOTT
CHURCH SHOCKLACH

DISTRICT: CHESTER

COUNTY: CHESHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 13422

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SJ43335078
SJ43465083

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument is situated in a dingle thought to have been one of the ancient trackways utilised by the Welsh in their frequent raids into southern Cheshire. It consists of a well preserved motte 4-5m high and a D-shaped moated enclosure separated by a small tributary of the River Dee and also a modern minor road.

The motte, which lies in the loop of the stream offering defence to the N and W, is protected by a partly waterlogged/silted ditch on its SW, S and E sides, beyond which is an outer bank. There is no evidence of a bailey immediately attached to this motte. However, 30m to the E lies a D-shaped moated enclosure measuring 54m W-E and surrounded on all sides except the S by a dry ditch.

A causeway crosses the ditch and gives access to the platform at the NE.

Earthworks consisting of banks and a ditch are conspicuous on the platform.

The monument was originally constructed by the Barons of Malpas c.1100 in an attempt to protect the region from frequent Welsh raids.

The monument comprises two separate protected areas. All hedges and fences are excluded from the scheduling, however, the ground beneath them is included.

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.

Shocklach Castle is of particular importance as one of a group of early post-Conquest (c.1100) mottes forming a defensive system aimed at curbing constant Welsh raids on the rich farming areas of south Cheshire. Additionally the site lies within an area containing the most important concentration of medieval monuments in Cheshire. These monuments include two shrunken medieval hamlets, a defended green lane, a Norman chapel, well preserved ridge and furrow, a ford across the River Dee, and a complex of communally owned watermeadows.

SCHEDULING HISTORY

Monument included in the Schedule on 29 November 1926 as:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Cheshire 9

NAME: Shocklach Castle

The reference of this monument is now:

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NAME: Shocklach Castle motte and moated enclosure

SCHEDULING REVISED ON 17th May 1991