

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

MONUMENT: Castle Farm moat and associated water management features, Cheney Longville

PARISH: WISTANSTOW

DISTRICT: SOUTH SHROPSHIRE

COUNTY: SHROPSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 13679

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SO41768482

### DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument is situated at Castle Farm, to the north west of Cheney Longville village and includes the earthwork and buried remains of a moated site, parts of the associated water management features and a number of post-medieval tanning pits. Approximately 150m north east of the moated site is Cheney Longville ringwork castle which is the subject of a separate scheduling.

The manor of Longville was owned by the Cheney family from the early 14th century and in 1395 Richard II granted Roger Cheney a licence to crenellate his house there. The property passed to the Plowdens in the 17th century, and onto the Beddoes family during the 18th century. The north western and north eastern moat ditches have been largely infilled, but they will survive as buried features, and the remains of an earthen bank at the eastern corner of the moated site indicates that the north eastern moat arm was originally bounded by a retaining bank which continues along the south eastern side of the moat. A narrow bank or spur divides the south eastern moat arm into two parts; here therefore, it takes the form of two parallel channels which are believed to have been associated with fish breeding. Access to the moated island is by means of a stone bridge across the now infilled north western moat ditch. The moated island is occupied by a group of stone buildings constructed on a courtyard plan believed to be medieval in origin. These include Castle Farmhouse, a Grade II\* Listed Building principally 17th century in date, and its associated farm buildings which are also Listed Grade II\*. The latter are believed to date from the 14th century with later alterations and retain a number of their original architectural features. They are now used as farm outbuildings and, together with the farmhouse itself, are not included in the scheduling.

Immediately to the north of the moated site is a large retaining bank, up to 2.5m high, which has been constructed across a stream channel (now channelled below the ground surface). The pond formed behind this dam is now dry and would have originally extended over a large area to the north and north west of the moated site. Together with the other water-management features surrounding the moated platform it would have served to enhance the visual impact, and thus the status, of the buildings which occupied the platform. From the 18th century onwards the land immediately to the south west of the moated island was used for tanning operations. The buildings associated with these activities are situated to the south west of the moated site, whilst

several small ponds, separated by stone retaining walls, have been laid out within the moat ditch itself. Here, the hides would have been steeped in vegetable solutions containing tannin and washed during the preparation processes of producing leather. These ponds provide evidence for later industrial activities at the site and are thus included in the scheduling.

Castle Farmhouse and all its outbuildings, the former tanning buildings, and the surfaces of the paths and the driveway are excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath these features 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.

The moated site at Castle Farm, Cheney Longville, survives well in the form of substantial earthworks and buried deposits and is unusual in being associated with a series of substantial standing buildings of medieval origin. The surviving system of water-management features is a good example of a medieval phenomenon which gives an insight into contemporary ideas of defence and status, as well as economy. Evidence for the reuse of part of the moat as tanning pits in the 18th and 19th centuries preserves valuable information about the tanning industry and the way it was carried out on this site. As a result of the survival of historical documents relating to both the medieval manor house and the post-medieval tanning activity the site is quite well understood.

MONUMENT INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULE ON 18th February 1997