

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Waytemore Castle: a motte and bailey castle immediately south of the River Stort

PARISH: BISHOP'S STORTFORD

DISTRICT: EAST HERTFORDSHIRE

COUNTY: HERTFORDSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 20628

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): TL49002147

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

Waytemore Castle is on low, marshy ground north of Bishop's Stortford on the west banks of the River Stort. The monument includes the ditched motte of a motte and bailey castle, later adapted as a shell keep. The oval shaped motte, orientated north-east to south-west, measures 83m by 65m and is about 12m high. On the summit of the motte are the flint rubble foundations of a shell keep enclosing an area of 27m by 12m and containing two sunken chambers. Although not visible at ground level, a ditch, which formed part of the castle defences, surrounds the motte mound. This has been infilled over the years but survives as a buried feature c.3m wide.

The castle was built by William I and was an early stronghold of the Bishops of London. It was used as a prison from 1344. Burials and coins relating to the prison have been found in the bailey area.

The bailey formed a roughly pentagonal enclosure to the south of the motte. The surrounding ditches have been heavily altered into narrow waterways and the bailey has been nearly levelled. The archaeological deposits of the bailey have been heavily disturbed and are not included in the scheduling. A flagpole has been erected on the motte. The flagpole, its concrete setting, the steps up the motte and the fence surrounding the motte are excluded from the scheduling, but 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.

Waytemore Castle has important royal and ecclesiastical associations with William I and the Bishops of London. The motte survives well and will retain archaeological and environmental evidence relating to the development and use of the castle from the 11th to the 14th century.

SCHEDULING HISTORY

Monument included in the Schedule on 27th August 1935 as:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Hertfordshire 5

NAME: Waytemore Castle, Bishop's Stortford

The reference of this monument is now:

NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 20628

NAME: Waytemore Castle: a motte and bailey castle immediately south of the River Stort

SCHEDULING AFFIRMED ON 03rd August 1992