

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Hyde Lea moated site and fishpond

PARISH: COPPENHALL

DISTRICT: SOUTH STAFFORDSHIRE

COUNTY: STAFFORDSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 21529

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SJ90612033

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes a moated site, a fishpond and the remains of a hollow way and is situated at the head of the valley of the Rising Brook, approximately 400m west of the village of Hyde Lea.

The four arms of the moat are water-filled and measure up to 20m wide. The moat was cleared out by drag-line in 1980 and is now fed by surface drainage. The south eastern moat ditch extends a further 20m eastwards to form a pond area. A slight break in the outer scarp of the moat at its southern extent may represent the location of an inlet channel, or old marl workings. There were originally external banks on the south western and western edges of the moated site which were heavily disturbed by ploughing before 1974. There is now no surface evidence of the external banks and the area to the west and south west of the moated site is not included in the scheduling.

The moated island measures 90m north-south and 70m west-east and is raised above the surrounding ground surface. The ground surface of the northern part of the island is slightly lower than that to the south. This forms a subsidiary platform which measures approximately 20m north-south and 50m west-east. There are no standing buildings on the moated island but there are slight earthworks, indicating the position of buried features. The original access onto the island is believed to have been by a timber bridge across the eastern arm of the moat, but access is currently by way of a modern causeway across the western arm. Small-scale excavations in 1951, 1960 and 1961 and an auger survey on the island provided evidence for the occupation of the moated site. Artefacts recovered included 13th and 14th century pottery, charcoal, animal bones and an early 14th century silver coin.

The fishpond to the north west of the moated site is separated from the eastern arm of the moat by a causeway. The fishpond is now dry and is triangular in plan. The pond is bounded on its east side by a retaining bank which measures approximately 2.5m high and up to 18m wide. This retaining bank has been breached by the Rising Brook which rises within the site and now flows SW-NE across the pond area. The remains of a hollow way, bounded by slight outer banks, can be traced as a shallow depression running west-east from the southern edge of the fishpond.

Hyde Lea moated site is considered to be the centre for the manor of Hyde. The lands known as the Hydes were granted to William Bagot in c.1140. The Bagots continued to hold the manor of Hyde until c.1340 when the site was taken over by Ralph, the first Earl of Stafford. An inquest in 1372 reveals that the manor of Hyde included two fishponds. By 1387 the manor house at Hyde appears

to have been granted away by the second Earl of Stafford. The dearth of documentary references to the manor of Hyde after the mid-16th century would suggest that the manor ceased to exist as a separate estate after this date. The concrete outflow channel and plastic pipes at the eastern edge of the moated site and the gate posts on the modern causeway are excluded from the scheduling, but 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 monument at Hyde Lea is a well preserved example of a water-management complex which combines a moated site and a fishpond. Partial excavation of the moated island has indicated the survival here of structural and artefactual evidence for the type and period of occupation, and for the economy of the site's inhabitants. Only a small proportion of the site has been excavated and substantial deposits survive undisturbed. The importance of the site is enhanced by detailed documentary records.

MONUMENT INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULE ON 18th January 1994