

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

MONUMENT: Maiden Castle prehistoric defended settlement and adjacent round barrow

PARISH: GRINTON

DISTRICT: RICHMONDSHIRE

COUNTY: NORTH YORKSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 24535

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SE02209809

### DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument is situated on a north facing slope on the lower flanks of High Harker Hill overlooking the confluence of two major valleys. The site would appear to have been chosen to utilize the spread of a natural stream gully which has created a hollow in the hillside and which has been subsequently levelled. The monument is oval in shape and measures 108m east to west by 88m north to south. The area has been enclosed by a substantial surrounding ditch and an inner rampart upon which are the footings of a stone wall. On the south side the ditch has been cut across the natural steep slope giving the exaggerated appearance of a massive inner rampart and in the south west the natural gully has been truncated by the enclosing work. There are no traces of an external bank or wall although a predominantly earthen bank emanates from the west side of the ditch and runs along the crest of the gully, terminating at its head. This bank would appear to be contemporary with the enclosure.

Access to the enclosure is in the east, where limited excavation has revealed large corner and facing stones forming an entrance 5m wide. A length of banking and short stretch of wall on the internal south side of the entrance may be the remains of some form of enclosure for gateway protection. This entrance is approached by a probably contemporary stone walled avenue, now tumbled, 114m long and averaging 6m wide between inner faces. Within the interior of the enclosure and slightly scarped into the inner rampart, are the remains of a stone founded hut circle with a diameter of 11m and 0.4m high with no definite traces of an entrance. An amorphous stony platform 20m to the south west, also slightly scarped into the inner rampart may also be a hut foundation.

At the eastern extent of the avenue is a large and somewhat mutilated round barrow built of earth and gravel 1.7m high with dimensions of 35m east to west by 28m north to south.

### ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

During the mid-prehistoric period (seventh to fifth centuries BC) a variety of different types of defensive settlements began to be constructed and occupied in the northern uplands of England. The most obvious sites were hillforts built in prominent locations. In addition to these a range of smaller sites, sometimes with an enclosed area of less than 1ha and defined as defended

settlements, were also constructed. Some of these were located on hilltops, others are found in less prominent positions. The enclosing defences were of earthen construction, some sites having a single bank and ditch (univallate), others having more than one (multivallate). At some sites these earthen ramparts represent a second phase of defence, the first having been a timber fence or palisade. Within the enclosure a number of stone or timber-built round houses were occupied by the inhabitants. Stock may also have been kept in these houses, especially during the cold winter months, or in enclosed yards outside them. The communities occupying these sites were probably single family groups, the defended settlements being used as farmsteads. Construction and use of this type of site extended over several centuries, possibly through to the early Romano-British period (mid to late first century AD). Defended settlements are a rare monument type. They were an important element of the later prehistoric settlement pattern of the northern uplands and are important for any study of the developing use of fortified settlements during this period. All well-preserved examples are believed to be of national importance.

Bowl barrows are funerary monuments dating from the Late Neolithic period to the Late Bronze Age, with most examples dating to the period 2400-1500BC. They were constructed as earthen or rubble mounds, sometimes ditched, which covered single or multiple burials. There are over 10000 surviving bowl barrows recorded nationally. Often occupying prominent locations, they are a major historic element in the modern landscape and their considerable variation in form, and longevity as a monument type provides important information on the diversity of beliefs and social organisation amongst early prehistoric communities. A substantial proportion of surviving examples are considered worthy of protection.

The earthwork is an impressive and well preserved example of this monument type.

#### SCHEDULING HISTORY

Records show that the monument was included in the Schedule on 26th June 1924 as:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Yorkshire 46

NAME: Maiden Castle, Grinton

Scheduling confirmed on 9th October 1981 as:

COUNTY/NUMBER: North Yorkshire 46

NAME: Maiden Castle, Grinton

The reference of this monument is now:

NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 24535

NAME: Maiden Castle prehistoric defended settlement and adjacent round barrow

SCHEDULING REVISED ON 04th July 1995