

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Medieval settlement and field system at Walburn Hall

PARISH: WALBURN

DISTRICT: RICHMONDSHIRE

COUNTY: NORTH YORKSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 31360

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SE12169591

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes earthwork and buried remains of the medieval village of Walburn, located in the shallow valley of Gill Beck and alongside Crowhill Gill to the east of Walburn Hall. Included in the monument are remains of the village and extensive remains of the associated field system. Also included are upstanding ruins and below ground remains of a high status medieval house and associated structures.

The first documentary record of the village of Walburn is in 1222. However, it has a regular street plan following the pattern of planned settlements built by the Normans during the late 11th and 12th centuries and it is likely to date from this period. It is known that at least two properties in the village were held by Ellerton priory. By the 14th century Walburn, in common with other villages in the area, suffered a decline in fortune due to bad harvests, disease and raids by the Scots. The current Walburn Hall, which dates to the 15th century, is built on the site of an earlier medieval high status dwelling and associated farm complex.

The monument occupies several fields surrounding Walburn Hall. The village remains lie on either side of Crowhill Gill on the slope to the north east of Walburn Hall. Remains of the field system are located in the fields to the south of the hall and to the south east of Walburn Bridge and also in the field on the slope between the road and Gill Beck to the north of the Hall. The medieval village took the form of two rows of buildings lying opposite each other, to the north and south of a wide village green containing the village street and through which the stream flowed. The stream now follows a meandering path, but in the medieval period it was canalised, and remains of this water management survive as earthworks. The buildings stood adjacent to the village street and within a set of regular enclosures known as tofts.

These had larger enclosures extending to the rear, the whole being known as a tenement. The tofts contained dwellings and other buildings in a small enclosure or yard with the croft to the rear being used for domestic horticulture and stock keeping. The village extended west across Gill Beck where the street is now occupied by the modern road. There were further tofts on the south side of the street with the medieval Walburn Hall and associated barnyard and gardens located opposite.

The remains of the village survive as substantial earthworks up to 1.5m high. The north row of the village includes eight rectangular buildings measuring up to 10m by 4m extending lengthways along the street frontage. The yards to the rear of these are up to 20sq m in size. Beyond these lie the crofts which are

preserved as long narrow fields separated by earthen banks and containing ridge and furrow, which are the remains of the medieval agricultural system. The row of tenements to the south follow the same pattern with eleven buildings occupying seven enclosures up to 20sq m in size, each of the tofts having similar sized yards. At the rear of these yards are remains of small buildings such as sheds and barns. Also within the yards are prominent divisions dividing the area into smaller enclosures. Some of the buildings preserve evidence of features such as internal divisions and doorways. To the west of Gill Beck and south of the road there are earthworks which include regular enclosures and some building platforms parallel to the line of the street. To the south of Walburn Hall, adjacent to the beck, is a complex of regular earthworks which has been interpreted as a formal garden associated with the post-medieval Walburn Hall. At the west end of Crowhill Gill, close to the bend in the road, there are remains of a mill and of a small kiln on the north bank of the stream. Further upstream are earthwork remains of a millpond and mill race. To the rear of the crofts north of Crowhill Beck there are the remains of a major trackway extending north from a bend in the modern road. This was the medieval route to Richmond.

In the fields to the south of the village and south of the Hall, west of the beck, are large blocks of linear, parallel earthworks known as ridge and furrow which form part of the medieval field system. Within these areas are surviving features such as headlands and balks which divided the fields into sections. Also within the field system there are remains of field barns and stack stands where newly harvested crops would be stored to dry. Analysis of the ridge and furrow has shown different stages of construction which represent the development of the field system over time. In the field north of the hall, to the east of Gill Beck, there are remains of ridge and furrow orientated east to west. The low lying area of fields around the beck south of Walburn bridge was an area of common pasture.

The remains of the high status house lie to the west of Walburn Bridge adjacent to and beneath the present Walburn Hall. In the medieval period a substantial house and a range of service buildings contained within an enclosed area was located here. The earliest standing ruins date to the 15th century, however the first occupation of the site is probably much earlier. Walburn Hall itself is 15th to 16th century in origin, with later alterations and additions. The Hall is an irregular L-shape around a cobbled courtyard with two smaller wings projecting to the rear. The courtyard is walled at the south and west sides with a crenellated parapet which is 15th century in origin but has been heavily restored in the 19th century when the battlements were added. Walburn Hall is Listed Grade I and the courtyard walls and Walburn Bridge are Listed Grade II.

Walburn Hall, which is still in use is therefore appropriately managed through its Listing status, and is excluded from the scheduling. There are, however, several sections of upstanding medieval masonry attached to the Hall which are included in the scheduling. At the north of the Hall there is a chimney stack standing to its full height. The chimney was originally the external gable for a single story building extending to the west. The chimney is 6m wide and the upper part narrows through a series of four successively smaller stages. On the inner face there was originally a very wide chimney opening but it is now a stone wall with a doorway built into it to create a small room at the bottom of the chimney. Extending to the north from the north west angle of the chimney there is a section of medieval wall 2.5m long and 1.5m high incorporated into the fabric of a small post-medieval building. At the end of this stretch the medieval wall turned to extend west.

Just south of the north west angle of Walburn Hall, a two storey length of wall 5m long spans the gap between the hall and the adjacent farm building. There is a door through the lower part and one complete and one incomplete window in the upper storey. To the south of here there are the ruins of the north end and parts of the east and west walls of a two storey rectangular building. This has been interpreted as a chapel. The north end has a large

arched window and a smaller round headed window at the first floor level and there are further windows in the side walls. The side walls are included in the monument only as far south as the dog kennels. From the east wall a short stretch of wall extends east to meet the south west angle of Walburn Hall. The lower part of this section is taken up with an arched doorway above which is the base for an elaborate first floor window.

The courtyard south of Walburn Hall and the old farmyard to the west are included in the monument as it is considered that significant medieval remains will survive here undisturbed.

The farmyard of the medieval hall probably extended into the area occupied by the present farmyard. Medieval remains have yet to be confirmed here, although some walls may be ancient, and hence this area is not included to facilitate current use.

In the field north of the Hall to the west of the beck there are earthwork remains of the medieval complex thought to include gardens. A number of features are excluded from the monument; these include, all gates, fences, field walls, the surface of tracks and roads, road traffic signs, the surfaces of all farmyards and courtyards, Walburn Hall garden walls and terraces, the bridge and associated walling, Walburn Hall, the dog kennels, the long farm building at the north of the farmyard, and the courtyard walls; however, the ground beneath these features is included.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Medieval rural settlements in England were marked by great regional diversity in form, size and type, and the protection of their archaeological remains needs to take these differences into account. To do this, England has been divided into three broad Provinces on the basis of each area's distinctive mixture of nucleated and dispersed settlements. These can be further divided into sub-Provinces and local regions, possessing characteristics which have gradually evolved during the past 1500 years or more.

The Yorkshire Dales local region is broadly an extension of the lowlands into the hill mass of the Pennines, but increasing environmental constraints have ensured that each dale has developed particular and often wholly local characteristics. The villages and hamlets on the valley side terraces of the lower and middle dales appear to be of medieval foundation, while the surrounding farmstead sites vary greatly in date, from early medieval to 19th century.

Medieval villages were organised agricultural communities, sited at the centre of a parish or township, that shared resources such as arable land, meadow and woodland. Village plans varied enormously, but when they survive as earthworks their most distinguishing features include roads and minor tracks, platforms on which stood houses and other buildings such as barns, enclosed crofts and small enclosed paddocks. They frequently included the parish church within their boundaries.

Most villages also included one or more high status residences which may belong to the lord of the manor. Such lordly residences may survive as visible remains as well as below ground deposits. They served as prestigious residences which, in general, included a great hall, private chambers, kitchens, service rooms and lodgings all arranged around courtyards. They were important foci of medieval rural life and local agricultural and village life was normally closely regulated by the lord of the manor.

In the northern province of England, villages were the most distinctive aspect of rural life, and their archaeological remains are one of the most important sources of understanding about rural life in the five or more centuries following the Norman conquest.

Medieval villages were supported by a communal system of agriculture based on large, unenclosed open arable fields. These large fields were subdivided into strips (known as landes) which were allocated to individual tenants. The

cultivation of these strips with heavy ploughs pulled by oxen-teams produced long, wide ridges, and the resultant 'ridge and furrow' where it survives is the most obvious physical indication of the open field system. Individual strips or landes were laid out in groups known as furlongs defined by terminal headlands at the plough turning-points and lateral grass balks. Furlongs were in turn grouped into large open fields. Well preserved ridge and furrow, especially in its original context adjacent to village earthworks, is both an important source of information about medieval agrarian life and a distinctive contribution to the character of the historic landscape. It is usually now covered by the hedges or walls of subsequent field enclosure. The medieval settlement and field system at Walburn Hall retains important archaeological remains, both earthwork and buried. The substantial and well preserved archaeological remains of the village demonstrate clearly the formal planned settlement introduced by the Normans in the years after the Conquest. Significant evidence of the social and economic history of the settlement and its ultimate decline and abandonment will be preserved.

MONUMENT INCLUDED IN THE SCHEDULE ON 10th October 2000