

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Moulton medieval settlement, field system and moated site

PARISH: MOULTON

DISTRICT: RICHMONDSHIRE

COUNTY: NORTH YORKSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 34813

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): NZ22400355
NZ23260407
NZ23620375
NZ23710398

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes extensive earthwork and buried remains of the medieval village of Moulton, including a moated site, a possible mill site and parts of the surrounding medieval field system. It is located in undulating land in the Vale of Mowbray and lies in fields immediately around the present village. The monument is divided into four separate areas of protection. One area occupies the fields immediately west of the current village and to the south and east of Moulton Hall, and contains part of the core of the settlement, the remains of the moated site and part of the surviving field system. The second area occupies the fields north of the current village and contains the remainder of the core of the settlement and remains of the field system. The third area occupies the field east of the road north to Middleton Tyas and contains remains of the field system. The fourth area occupies the paddock in the centre of the current village and contains further remains of the medieval settlement and the suggested site of a mill. The settlement lay at the head of a shallow valley with the core of the settlement lying on a prominent bluff to the west and the mill and moated site lying on the lower ground to the south east where a manageable water supply was available. Earthwork remains of these features are clearly visible both on the ground and on aerial photographs. Further remains of the settlement and field system are visible on early aerial photographs lying adjacent to the monument. These have been reduced by agricultural activity and are not included in the monument.

The form of the surviving medieval village remains indicate that it was a planned village built after the 'Harrying of the North' in 1069/70, when a rebellion by the native population against the Norman invasion was suppressed with great ferocity causing widespread devastation throughout the land. Such regular planned settlements were then built throughout the region. The first currently known documentary record of the village of Moulton is the Domesday Book in 1086 when the lordship of the manor was held by Alan, a Norman Count, and it is recorded that four villagers and four small-holders were resident. It is known that in 1285 land in the village was held by the Abbot of Eggleston and by the Knights Templar. A survey in 1301 recorded 20 names in the village. In the 13th century a cell of the French Abbey of Bagard was established at Moulton. The chapel for this survives as an occupied building to the north east of the Manor House, although it is not included in the

scheduling. By the mid-14th century Moulton, in common with other villages in the area, suffered a decline in fortune due to bad harvests, disease and raids by the Scots and around this time the original medieval settlement was abandoned. The focus of the settlement then shifted to the south east around a green straddling the north-south route way. The exact nature and date of this re-location is not yet known. In the 17th century two grand houses, the Manor House and Moulton Hall, were built to the south of the green.

The medieval village took the form of two rows of opposing buildings lying to the north and south of a village street. This street remains in use as the main east to west route through Moulton. 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. In common with other settlements in the area the village was on a spur off the main north-south route.

The area between the rows of tenements has been substantially disturbed by later quarrying. This has resulted in a quarry face up to 3m in height cut up to 20m deep into the north row. The southern row has been cut back by up to 10m leaving a quarry face up to 1m in height.

The remains of the village survive as prominent earthworks standing up to 0.5m high. The northern row of the village includes at least eight tofts measuring up to 20 sq m in size. At the western end of this row the remains of the buildings fronting the street survive but further east these have been destroyed by quarrying. At the rear of the tofts are remains of rectangular buildings such as sheds and barns. The crofts to the rear on the north row are shorter in length, their extent being dictated by the natural slope to the north.

The row of tenements to the south follow the same pattern with the quarrying action having partly destroyed the street frontage. The surviving earthworks include clearly defined tofts up to 20 sq m with buildings at their rear.

Also within the tofts are prominent divisions dividing the area into smaller enclosures. Within some of the buildings features such as internal divisions and doorways can be identified. Beyond these lie the crofts which are preserved as long narrow fields separated by earthen banks measuring up to 70m in length.

The field system associated with the medieval village survives as large blocks of linear, parallel earthworks known as ridge and furrow. 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 recently harvested crops would be stored to dry. Remains of the field system survive to the rear of the medieval settlement north of Barley Garth and to the west of the Manor House. Further substantial remains of the field system survive to the east of Moulton Hall Farm. Here the ridges measure up to 12m from centre to centre and stand 0.4m high. Further substantial remains of the field system occupy the field to the north east of the current village.

In the paddock in the centre of the current village there are a series of low earthworks which appear to be associated with water management. It is suggested that these may be associated with the site of a medieval mill. The moated site is located in the northern part of the field east of Moulton Hall. It includes a substantial platform measuring 38m north-south by 30m east-west. It is enclosed on the northern, western and southern sides by a ditch measuring 4m wide and 1.2m deep. The eastern side is marked by a substantial bank which extends north to south along the length of the field. Water was fed into the north eastern corner of the moat from a leat or water channel extending northwards to the west of the bank. At the south eastern corner of the moat there is a shallow leat extending east which channelled water to the stream to the east. The moated site lay on the edge of the village and probably supported one of the more prestigious dwellings in the

settlement. Such moated sites were often occupied by high status families and their location can be evidence of wealthy citizens moving to a more prominent position away from the main settlement.

The bank running north-south extends from the northern edge of the field, past the moat and continues south for approximately 150m then curves to the west to the south western corner of the field. For most of its length it survives as a raised flat-topped earthwork up to 5m wide. As well as enclosing the moat to the west it also forms the boundary to a well-preserved block of ridge and furrow opposite Moulton Hall. The bank may have served several purposes including a track way, flood defences and property boundary. A number of features are excluded from the monument; these include, all gates, fences, field and walls, the surface of tracks and roads, road traffic signs, animal feeding equipment, all garden structures and paths, the animal shelter in the field north of The Granary and the summerhouse south of the Manor House, although the ground beneath all 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, and as part of the manorial system most villages included one or more manorial centres which may survive as visible remains as well as below ground deposits. 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 lands) 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 lands 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.

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 the central and eastern parts of England. However, moated sites were built throughout the medieval period, are widely scattered throughout England and exhibit a high diversity of forms and sizes. They form a significant class of medieval monuments and are important for understanding the distribution of wealth and status in the countryside.

As part of the economic functions of the community most villages contained one or more watermills. A watermill uses the gravitational force of water to turn a paddled wheel which enabled the operation of varying kinds of machinery. The wheel could be set directly into a river or stream or more commonly powered by water fed through artificial channels. By the time of the Domesday Book an estimated 6,000 were in existence. During the medieval period mills were usually used for grinding corn but with technological improvements their use spread to further agricultural and industrial purposes such as tilt hammers, bellows and textile processing.

The medieval settlement of Moulton 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 02nd October 2001