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ACTION

ACK

Chief Executive
Bassetlaw District Council
Queens Buildings
Potter Street
Worksop
Nottinghamshire
S80 2AH

Ref. : MPP14/ AA 31009/1

Date : 26th May 1998

MONUMENT NAME : Medieval settlement and open field system immediately south
east of Low Farm
DISTRICT : BASSETLAW
COUNTY : NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
MONUMENT NUMBER : 29915

Dear Sir/Madam

ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREAS ACT 1979, AS AMENDED

I am requested by the Secretary of State to inform your Council that the scheduled area of the above-named monument has been revised. The monument (as revised) has been included in the Schedule compiled and maintained by him under Section 1 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended).

A copy of the amended entry in the Schedule relating to the monument is enclosed. The site of the monument is shown outlined in black and highlighted in red on the enclosed map extract. These documents are the official record of the above-named scheduled monument.

The fact that this monument has been scheduled means that it is recognised as being of national importance. The primary purpose of scheduling a monument is to preserve it for the future, and to protect it from damage, destruction or any unnecessary interference. It also ensures that if, in the last resort, damage or destruction is unavoidable, this does not take place before appropriate provision has been made for the monument to be investigated by experts. We hope that your Council would see fit to include in its development plans adequate policies designed to ensure the preservation of all scheduled monuments in its area.

I would be grateful if you would ensure that any papers relating to the former scheduled area of this monument are removed from your records, so that only the current scheduled area, with its national number and current name, is recorded.

I am writing separately to the local Land Charge Registrar.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours faithfully

Scheduling Section
English Heritage

(see table)
Encs: Schedule entry, 'Scheduled Monument' map extract

SCHEDULE ENTRY COPY

ENTRY IN THE SCHEDULE OF MONUMENTS COMPILED AND MAINTAINED BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE UNDER SECTION 1 OF THE ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREAS ACT 1979 AS AMENDED.

MONUMENT: Medieval settlement and open field system immediately south east of Low Farm

PARISH: WEST BURTON

DISTRICT: BASSETLAW

COUNTY: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 29915

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SK79868531

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument is situated adjacent to the former west bank of the River Trent and includes the earthwork and buried remains of the medieval settlement of West Burton. West Burton or 'Burtone' was first recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 where it is documented that the village was owned by the Archbishop of York and Roger de Busli and was one of several berewicks belonging to Laneham. A berewick was a settlement which was physically separate from the village where the lord lived but still governed as part of the manorial estate.

A map dating to 1750 illustrates that the village was still in existence at this time and shows a total of 15 houses and a church on the site. An account of the village made just over 40 years later records only seven or eight houses with an estimated population of 45. This decline in the village continued and by the beginning of the 19th century it had practically disappeared. A map dating to 1895 clearly shows that the village, with the exception of the church, was no longer in existence.

The precise reason for the desertion of the village is not clear but can be inferred from documentary evidence. It is recorded that the land around West Burton, which was privately enclosed during the 18th century, was of particularly good quality and, following enclosure, extortionate rent increases left the farmers with the choice of acceptance or dismissal. It is quite possible that this led to the final abandonment of an already diminishing village. Another contributing factor may come from the evidence that around this time the river changed its course. In the immediate vicinity the River Trent formed two large loops known as the Bole and Burton Rounds which are clearly visible on modern maps. Gradually the narrow necks of land were eroded away by the river and in 1792 the river broke through leaving the old channels to slowly silt up. The river would have been very important to the economy of the village and possibly provided the main route for transport in and out of the village. Its change of course would have affected the community quite drastically.

In 1884 the parish of West Burton was united with that of North and South Wheatley and, following vestry meetings, a faculty was granted in 1886 to

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AUTHORISED BY: A R Middleton

On behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under
batch no: 10420

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT (Continued)

demolish the disused church at West Burton.

The monument survives as a series of earthworks and buried remains. The earthworks clearly reflect the basic layout of the village as depicted on the mid-18th century map, although it appears that the remains have been truncated by the modern development to the north. It also appears that the site of Low Farm, a 19th century building, itself now derelict, was the site of earlier medieval structures.

The north east corner of the village is visible as a line of three rectangular enclosures or tofts; these are aligned east to west and are bounded by low earthen banks standing to an average height of 0.5m. At the eastern end of two of the tofts, traces of slight rectangular platforms indicate the foundations of medieval houses. The enclosures measure just over 50m long and up to 25m wide and are marked on the western boundary by a shallow ditch approximately 0.5m deep. This is interpreted as a lane to provide access to the tofts. To the south of the enclosures are a further two which are roughly square in plan and measure 50m by 50m. These front onto the main sunken track or hollow way running through the village. The trackway survives as a wide gully, up to 2m deep, which runs from the old west bank of the River Trent at the eastern end to the site of Low Farm at the west end. Three other broad hollow ways are also evident; these too run east to west and are all parallel to the main hollow way. The western ends of two of these tracks turn to the north and link up. From here the trackway continues north to just south of Low Farm where it turns north west, crosses the modern field boundary, and runs to the edge of the monument. The trackways are laid out at intervals of between 75m and 100m, separated by extensive village earthworks. At various points along the hollow ways, and cutting into the banks, are a number of roughly oval-shaped depressions; these are interpreted as being the result of post-medieval quarrying.

At the southern end of the monument are a number of other oval-shaped depressions. These are arranged either side, but set back from, the southernmost trackway. They are interpreted as ponds and may relate to a fishery which was recorded in the Domesday Book as 'rendering 200 eels'. To the north of the southernmost track and adjacent to the old west bank of the River Trent are the remains of two more platforms. These are sub-rectangular in shape, aligned east to west and are defined by banks up to 0.75m in height. Erosion scars, particularly around the southern most platform, have exposed areas of dressed stone which are interpreted as being the foundations of a medieval homestead. This platform is bounded to the south by a broad gully which links with the old River Trent to the east and which turns to the north at the western end of the platform. The gully continues to run in a northerly direction until it meets with one of the hollow ways. This is thought to be a back lane which provided access to the homesteads and which linked the properties to the main village road system. In effect the back lane, hollow way and river enclosed both platforms. These platforms are situated at the lowest point of the village and were likely to be prone to flooding. This may account for the name 'Moaty Yard' which was recorded for this part of the village on the map of 1750. Just north of 'Moaty Yard' is a large mound on which stood the parish church of St Helen. The church demolished in 1895 but the churchyard which measures

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DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT (Continued)

approximately 43m by 25m survives, surrounded by a fence. A number of gravestones are still standing but the majority can be found lying in the grass.

To the north west of the church are the remains of at least two more tofts. These are defined and separated by shallow ditches with a single low bank forming the western boundary. Slight traces of house platforms are visible at the eastern end of the enclosures. A large oval shaped pond lies to the south of these tofts.

In the field to the south west of Low Farm are further extensive village earthworks which include faint traces of ridge and furrow (cultivation strips). These are visible to the south of the hollow way and extend southwards to approximately half way down the field where they are marked by a headland. These earthworks are part of the medieval open field system of which they form part of a single furlong (a group of cultivation strips). The remains stand to a height of approximately 0.2m.

To the south of this field is a large irregular shaped pond with a narrow drainage channel extending to the south. Although eroding around its banks, the pond still contains water. Further village earthworks are visible in this field but are irregular and difficult to interpret. It is thought that the earthworks represent different phases in the development of the village. That there were several phases is not surprising considering the village was active for over 600 years.

All fences, gates, water troughs, and modern metalled surfaces are excluded from the scheduling, although the ground beneath all of 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 last 1500 years or more.

This monument lies in the Pennine Slope sub-Province of the Central Province, which embraces the varied scarp and vale topography flanking the higher portions of the southern Pennines, where narrow escarpments of limestone and sandstone and softer shale vales give a distinct north-south grain to the landscape. Dispersed settlement increases from extremely low to medium densities in the south east of the sub-Province to high densities at the north west. With the exception of Sherwood Forest, the region is well stocked with nucleated settlements, some old but others the result of 18th- and 19th-century industrial developments. Anglo-Saxon 'wood' names are common among placenames, and the area was well wooded in 1086.

The Millstone Grit Scarps local region is an undulating terrain of north to south sandstone ridges separated by vales. It is characterised by village settlements, with low densities of scattered dwellings and farmsteads between

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ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE (Continued)

them. Many of the villages have, however, grown in recent centuries, and the medieval settlement pattern was of hamlets and farmsteads set in a woodland landscape.

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 include the parish church within their boundaries. In the central province of England, villages were the most distinctive aspect of medieval 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 baulks. 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 earthwork and buried remains of the medieval settlement of West Burton are particularly well preserved and retain significant archaeological deposits. The earthworks and historical documentation provide a clear picture of the village layout and how it fitted within the wider environment. The documentary sources also provide evidence of how the village was administered and data indicating reasons for its desertion. Taken as a whole, the medieval settlement of West Burton will add greatly to our knowledge and understanding of the development of settlement in the area during this period.

This monument has been reviewed and the mapped depiction amended to more accurately reflect the extent of the remains in the area immediately east of Low Farm.

MAP EXTRACT

The site of the monument is shown on the attached map extract outlined in black and highlighted in red.

SCHEDULING HISTORY

Monument included in the Schedule on 19th August 1954 as:

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On behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under batch no: 10420

DEPARTMENT FOR CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT BATCH NUMBER: 10420

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NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 29915

SCHEDULING HISTORY (Continued)

COUNTY/NUMBER: Nottinghamshire 103
NAME: Deserted Village of West Burton

Scheduling amended on 6th May 1988 to:
COUNTY/NUMBER: Nottinghamshire 103
NAME: West Burton Deserted Medieval Village

The reference of this monument is now:
NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 29915
NAME: Medieval settlement and open field system immediately south east of Low Farm

SCHEDULING REVISED ON 29th April 1998

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On behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport under
batch no: 10420