



English Heritage

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Chief Planning Officer
Bassetlaw District Council
Planning Department
Queens Buildings
Potter Street
Worksop
Nottinghamshire
S80 2AH

Ref. : MPP23/ AA 31028/01

Date : 2nd December 1992

MONUMENT NAME : Worksop Castle: eleventh century motte castle and twelfth century shell keep castle
DISTRICT : BASSETLAW
COUNTY : NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
MONUMENT NUMBER : 13395

Dear Sir/Madam

ANCIENT MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL AREAS ACT 1979, AS AMENDED

The above-named monument is already included in the Schedule compiled and maintained by the Secretary of State under Section 1 of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, as amended. I am requested to inform you that the scheduled area of the monument has now been revised to that shown outlined in black and highlighted in red on the enclosed map extract. The monument, as revised, has been included in the Schedule. Please ensure that papers that refer to the former scheduled area of this monument are destroyed.

Please amend your records accordingly.

Yours faithfully

O. Faulkner

Scheduling Section
English Heritage

Encs: map extract, Schedule entry (where required)

*Drawing Office to amend
outside of site
Then to DS*

BASSETLAW DISTRICT COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
RECEIVED
- 4 DEC 1992

SIGNED BY: G. Edwards

On behalf of The Secretary of State for National Heritage.

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: Worksop Castle: eleventh century motte castle and twelfth century shell keep castle

PARISH: WORKSOP

COUNTY: NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

DISTRICT: BASSETLAW

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 13395

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SK58297882

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The castle at Worksop is situated on a sandstone promontory overlooking the valley of the River Ryton. The monument includes the motte or castle mound, part of the surrounding ditch and an outwork on the west side. A bailey or outer enclosure would formerly have extended into the surrounding area and been the location of features such as ancillary and garrison buildings and corrals for stock and horses. Although archaeological remains relating to the bailey are likely to survive beneath modern urban development, they have not been included in the scheduling as their extent and state of preservation is not sufficiently understood.

The growth of the modern town has concealed the strategic location of the castle, but originally it was built to command the surrounding land and the marshy river valley to the north. According to Domesday Book, the land was held by the Saxon lord Elsi prior to 1066 and it is believed that a Saxon fortification may have preceded the Norman castle. The first Norman castle was probably built by Roger de Busli in the late eleventh century. Initially it would have comprised a timber keep or stockade but this had been rebuilt in stone by the end of the twelfth century under the lordship of the de Lovetots. The form of the stone castle is not fully understood because, by the sixteenth century, it had been demolished and only the foundations will now survive on the castle mound. The appearance of the motte, however, indicates that it would have been a shell keep. The motte is a flat-topped earthwork roughly 50m in diameter and stands between 10m and 12m high above the base of the surrounding ditch. On the north-east side, erosion has exposed the construction material and shows that an artificial layer 2-2.5m thick was built on top of natural sandstone roughly 8m thick. The ditch on the south and west sides, the only areas where it has not been encroached upon by modern development, is c.10m wide. On the west side it is flanked by an oval mound c.3m high and measuring 10m by 15m. This outwork would have been the location of a gate-tower leading to a drawbridge over the ditch and would have been the main point of access into the keep.

A number of features within the area are excluded from the scheduling. These are the commemorative limestone block on top of the castle mound, benches, the metal railing along the north side of the motte, a telegraph pole, the surface of the path from Norfolk Street to the car park south of the monument, the steps up to the car park, all boundary walling and fencing and the line of bollards along the south-east edge of the monument which divide it from the back lane behind the houses on Norfolk Street. The ground beneath these

(Continued ..)

SIGNED BY: C.Edwards

On behalf of The Secretary of State for National Heritage.

Continued from previous page ..

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT (Continued)

features is, however, included in the scheduling.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Motte castles are medieval fortifications introduced into Britain by the Normans. They comprised a large conical mound of earth or rubble, the motte, surmounted by a palisade and a stone or timber tower. In a majority of examples an embanked enclosure containing additional buildings, the bailey, adjoined the motte. Motte castles and motte-and-bailey castles acted as garrison forts during offensive military operations, as strongholds, and, in many cases, as aristocratic residences and as centres of local or royal administration. Built in towns, villages and open countryside, motte castles generally occupied strategic positions dominating their immediate locality and, as a result, are the most visually impressive monuments of the early post-Conquest period surviving in the modern landscape. Over 600 motte castles and motte-and-bailey castles are recorded nationally, with examples known from most regions. Some 100-150 examples do not have baileys and are classified as motte castles. As one of a restricted range of recognised early post-Conquest monuments, they are particularly important for the study of Norman Britain and the development of the feudal system. Although many were occupied for only a short period of time, motte castles continued to be built and occupied from the 11th to the 13th centuries, after which they were superseded by other types of castle.

Between the Conquest and the mid-thirteenth century, usually during the twelfth century, a number of mottes and other earthwork castles were remodelled in stone so that the timber palisade was replaced by a thick defensive wall known as a shell keep. The shell keep would have carried a timber wall-walk and timber buildings would have been built round the interior. The castle at Worksop is an example of this though, now, only the earthwork remains survive. These, however, are reasonably well-preserved and will retain significant archaeological remains relating to the structures built on the motte and on the adjacent outwork.

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 8th August 1930 as:
 COUNTY/NUMBER: Nottinghamshire 15
 NAME: Worksop Castle mound

The reference of this monument is now:

NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 13395
 NAME: Worksop Castle: eleventh century motte castle and twelfth century shell keep castle

SCHEDULING REVISED ON 26th November 1992

SIGNED BY: C.Edwards

On behalf of The Secretary of State for National Heritage.