

Case Name: Moated site 118m S of Manor Farm House, and area of ridge and furrow known as Big Grounds, Willoughby

Case Number: 467426

Background

We have been asked to assess the moated site and an area of ridge and furrow for scheduling.

Asset(s) under Assessment

Facts about the asset(s) can be found in the Annex(es) to this report.

Annex	List Entry Number	Name	Heritage Category	EH Recommendation
1	1404858	Moated site S of Manor Farm House	Scheduling	Add to Schedule

Visits

Date	Visit Type
05 August 2011	Full inspection

Context

The application has come forward in response to a planning application for the development of part of the field south and east of Moor Lane, known as land at Pear Tree Farm. The area is subject to an Article 4 direction controlling development. There is a high degree of urgency in the determination of the application for scheduling as the planning application is shortly due for determination and the designated status of the site will be a primary consideration.

PAST DESIGNATION HISTORY

An application was received earlier in 2011 requesting that we consider only the land at Pear Tree Farm for scheduling; this was treated as a hotcase as a previous planning application was due for determination at the time. The application for scheduling the land at Pear Tree Farm, also known as Big Grounds, was rejected at initial assessment on the basis of a desk-based assessment.

We have been advised that ploughing has begun in the field containing the ridge and furrow, so the case is now urgent.

Assessment

CONSULTATION

The owners, the applicant, the County Archaeology Service, the Historic Environment Service and the local planning authority were invited to comment on the factual details of the case as part of the consultation process. Responses were received from the County Archaeology Service, the applicant and the owner of the field known as Land at Pear Tree Farm. The response from the County Archaeology Service comprised the Historic Environment Records for the sites in question, which were already reflected in the Consultation Report.

The APPLICANT has provided further documentary evidence along with some observations on the Consultation Report. Some of the points made are speculative and not supported by our research or other sources. Those points relevant to the assessment are set out below, and where necessary, considered further in the Discussion.

COMMENT

That Pear Tree Farm does not exist and there is no record of there having been a farm there in the past.

RESPONSE

The land has been referred to within the planning process as Land at Pear Tree Farm, and for ease of reference for all the parties consulted, this was used as part of the name of the site, which is also known as Big Ground or Grounds, and land off Moor Lane, in the Consultation Report. The name of the site has no bearing on the assessment as we do not consider the name to imply that the assessment area has been the site of a farm at any point in the past.

COMMENT

That parts of the church are likely to date from before the C16, the date ascribed to it in the Consultation Report.

RESPONSE

Whilst it is of course possible that there was an earlier church on the site, which may help to indicate the site of part of the medieval settlement, there is no evidence for this; the List Description, the Victoria County History and the Buildings of England volume for the area all agree on a date in the early C16. In the absence of evidence to the contrary we are unable to alter our opinion on its probable date.

COMMENT

That the levelling of the area at the north-eastern edge of the ridge and furrow site did not involve the loss of any of the ridge and furrow lands as it was part of the flood plain of Moor Gutter.

RESPONSE

Survey of the site, including that undertaken to inform the report by Benchmark Archaeology, shows that there is an area of low ridge-and furrow extending northwards beyond the complete lands to the eastern side of the site, divided from them by a drainage channel which appears to respect the headlands immediately to its south. These remains of lower lands extend northwards towards and apparently just under the new hedge-line surrounding the levelled area, indicating that they have been truncated.

The OWNER of the land at Pear Tree Farm or Big Grounds site passed on a further copy of the report by Benchmark which we had consulted in compiling the Consultation Report, and was acknowledged as one of our selected sources in that report. The information was reflected in the Consultation Report, and helps to inform the Discussion. The owner also passed on further comments and observations. Those which are relevant to the assessment for scheduling are set out briefly here. The owner discussed the background to English Heritage's previous research into medieval field systems, including past precedent. These points are a matter of fact, and form part of the basis of the assessment of national importance and suitability for scheduling in the Discussion. The owner reminds English Heritage of past designation approaches, where samples of ridge-and-furrow have been scheduled where they have a clear relationship to the archaeological remains of medieval settlements, but that in many cases, scheduling is not considered to provide the most appropriate management tool for more extensive ridge-and-furrow landscapes. This is covered in our Discussion. The other substantive points raised in response to the Consultation Report are dealt with in turn, below and where necessary, considered further in the Discussion.

COMMENT

That the application for the moated site to the north together with this area of ridge and furrow implies a specific archaeological or tenurial relationship between them which did not exist.

RESPONSE

This is not suggested in the report, other than to recognise that the moated site and the ridge and furrow are parts of the same medieval landscape of Willoughby, which we are clear went well beyond these two areas.

COMMENT

That the village contains many more acres of equally well-preserved ridge and furrow, and that it would be illogical to select this field for scheduling and not the remainder of the township fields.

RESPONSE

As the response acknowledges, this is recognised in our Consultation Report, where we are clear that the ridge and furrow landscape extends well beyond the area under assessment, most prominently to the west and south. The principle of selecting for scheduling a sample of ridge and furrow which forms part of a wider landscape of ridge and furrow is considered in the Discussion which follows.

COMMENT

That the moated site under consideration for scheduling is degraded by tree growth, and has lost its direct association with the field systems due to the creation of a paddock at the north end of Big Grounds.

RESPONSE

The moated site does have some tree growth, but it survives well in all other respects, in particular the depth of the ditches and their definition, as well as their continued waterlogged state. There has been no apparent disturbance of the islands other than the tree growth, which has been managed to a degree by the current

owner, and is not as extensive as it might appear from the foliage visible at the roadside. The possible impact of the tree growth on the archaeological potential of the site is considered in the Discussion below.

DISCUSSION

The 1979 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) states monuments are scheduled by reason of their archaeological, historic, architectural, artistic or traditional national importance. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Scheduled Monuments: Identifying, protecting, conserving and investigating nationally important archaeological sites under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, Annex 1 (March 2010) sets out the non-statutory criteria which provide further guidance on assessing national importance. They state that when archaeological sites are assessed for scheduling, the key considerations are period, rarity, documentation, group value, survival/condition, fragility/vulnerability, diversity and potential. Monuments are assessed under those of the criteria relevant to their type. They should not be regarded as definitive, but as indicators which contribute to a wider judgment based on the individual circumstances of a case. Archaeological sites are assessed for their national importance, which is the key indicator of their significance. Those which are identified as of national importance may then be scheduled, if this is considered to be the most appropriate tool for their future management. Sites may be considered to be of national importance; but the Secretary of State may still use his discretion not to add the site to the Schedule.

The area currently under assessment includes two separate archaeological sites: the moated site, and the ridge and furrow cultivation within the field known as Big Grounds or land at Pear Tree Farm. As these form two different classes of monument, they are discussed separately here.

The MOATED SITE appears well-preserved, with the ditches surviving to a good depth, and remaining in water for much of the year. Its form is unchanged since at least the late C19, as shown on the historic Ordnance Survey maps, and conforms to the usual form and layout of such sites. Though there is some tree-growth on the island, it does not appear to have been used for horticulture, and remains unencumbered by later development; it will retain the buried remains of buildings or structures on the site related to its construction and use. The moat ditches are waterlogged and will retain both artefacts and environmental information relating to the occupation of the site and the economy of its inhabitants. There is no record of any excavation or archaeological evaluation on the site, indicating that, apart from the limited action of tree-roots, there has been little below-ground disturbance to impact upon the otherwise very good potential for the survival of buried remains.

Moated sites form a significant class of medieval monument and are important for the understanding of the distribution of wealth and status in the countryside. This example may have been the site of a manor house, although there is no visible evidence of any buildings surviving on the island. The manor house might equally have been situated to the north, at the site of the current Manor Farm House (C18), close to the current church. Although the church dates from the early C16, it has been suggested that it may be on the site of an earlier building. Although the precise location of the medieval settlement with which it would have been associated is not known, it is likely to have lain to the north-east of the moated site, in the area close to the church, if this was indeed the site of the medieval place of worship. The scheduling applicant has undertaken considerable and painstaking documentary research into the history of Willoughby; despite examining many of the multitude of documents which survive, as yet it has not been possible to pinpoint the location of the manors at any particular point in time. Without archaeological investigation of the moated site, it is not possible to confirm its identification as one of the manors at Willoughby; this increases the value of its archaeological potential, as the buried remains may provide the only evidence of how it was used. The village of Willoughby has a wealth of good historic documentation, and though it has not so far been possible to firmly link this documentation with the moated site, should further archaeological research provide this link it will further enhance the significance of the site, as the value of the archaeological evidence and the documentary evidence taken together is greater than either in isolation; they will complement each other to tell a fuller picture and the one can correct misinterpretations of the other.

The moated site also benefits from associations with other historic assets in close proximity, in particular the C16 church (listed at Grade II*), the C18 manor house (listed at Grade II), and the possible remains of the former manor house garden, of which it forms a part. The form of the moated site, with one larger island and a smaller annexe, is relatively unusual. The islands will retain evidence of their respective use which will aid our understanding of their individual functions and relationship to one another.

The moated site at Willoughby is clearly of national importance, and it is recommended that this well-defined site should be scheduled, as this provides an appropriate way to guide its future management.

The moated site sits within the remains of an open field system which survives as an extensive area of RIDGE AND FURROW, surrounding the modern village on all sides. The area of ridge and furrow under assessment is situated to the south of the moated site, and is divided from it by a road, Moor Lane, which runs east-west at this point and then curves away on the west side until it runs north-east to south-west. It appears likely from documentary evidence that the east-west section of Moor Lane makes a change in ownership boundaries which pre-dates the creation of the lane at the time of the 1760 Inclosure. The moated site had already been inclosed prior to that date, so the northern extent of the area under assessment is likely to represent the northern boundary of the pre-Inclosure open field of which Big Grounds forms a part. However, the western boundary of the field under consideration is formed by the western extension of Moor Lane, and this drives through the furlong of ridge and furrow lands at the western edge of the assessment area, meaning that it is incomplete on this side. Similarly, an area at the north-eastern corner of the assessment area has been levelled, to create paddocks, and although the applicant contends that this has not resulted in any loss of lands, there is some evidence of low ridge and furrow extending northwards at this point which would have emerged under the new hedge-line around this plot. There has, therefore, been some loss in this area, so its survival is not as complete as it might be. This field is fairly close to the probable site of the medieval settlement, though towards its western edge, and divided from it by both the Moor Gutter (the brook associated with the moated site) and the pre-Inclosure boundary now marked by Moor Lane.

The remainder of the ridge and furrow is well-preserved, surviving as well-defined earthworks, and does not appear to have been subject to later cultivation. We have been advised as this report was being finalised that a small area of the field has now been ploughed; it is hard to ascertain from photographs provided by the local authority to what depth, and precisely how large an area is affected, although there will undoubtedly be additional disturbance in this area. The ridge and furrow in this field contains a number of the typical features expected in such a landscape, which give a clear demonstration of how the lands were laid out and ploughed, and how the various furlongs relate to each other. As this is poor agricultural land which has been in use for grazing since at least the C19, the archaeological potential in this area is likely to be confined to material dating from the use of the site for agriculture in the medieval period. However, it is impossible to consider this fragment of the former medieval open-field system for designation in isolation: its significance lies more in the fact that it forms a small part of a much wider, well-preserved medieval open field system than in its individual archaeological interest, and it is at the landscape scale that its claims to national importance will lie.

Ridge and furrow survives over large areas of the Midlands, and as such is not rare, though it is inherently vulnerable to loss through development or changing agricultural practice. The area under assessment forms part of a very extensive landscape of ridge and furrow surrounding the modern village of Willoughby on all sides, and documentary research being undertaken by the applicant, allied with earlier research by David Hall, who studied the landscape character of the area with particular reference to surviving medieval open field systems (published in *Turning the Plough* by English Heritage and Northamptonshire District Council in 2001), has shown that a large proportion of the three medieval open fields surrounding the medieval settlement of Willoughby can be identified today, with well-preserved ridge and furrow characterising their terrain. It is evident from the documents held by Magdalen College and others that much of the layout, tenure and ownership of the medieval open field system could be reconstructed, and this adds much to our understanding of the historic land use and pattern of landholding in the medieval period. Overall, therefore, it is evident that the entire landscape of ridge and furrow surrounding the modern village of Willoughby is of national importance by virtue of its extent and the proportion of the medieval area under plough which it represents.

Ridge and furrow has been the subject of considerable attention at English Heritage over recent years. In the past, some small areas of ridge and furrow have been designated where they form surviving integral parts of contemporary settlements, such as medieval village earthworks and motte and bailey castles. This field is fairly close to the probable site of the medieval settlement, though towards its western edge, and divided from it by both the Moor Gutter (the brook associated with the moated site) and the pre-Inclosure boundary now marked by Moor Lane, and does not form the only surviving element of ridge and furrow associated with the remains of medieval settlement. It has in addition suffered some losses, and so is not recommended for designation as a sample. It is, however, necessary to consider whether or not the wider landscape of medieval open fields which surrounds the village, with its distinctive pattern of ridge and furrow cultivation, should be recommended for scheduling as a whole, as this is where its national importance lies.

Extensive landscapes of ridge and furrow, such as that at Willoughby, are not generally suitable candidates for scheduling, as this introduces a very restrictive form of control over the use of very large areas of land, most of it commonly in agricultural use and selection is necessary for classes of site which do survive in quite high numbers. Therefore, it is not recommended that this wider landscape should be scheduled. The vast majority of archaeological sites and areas in England are managed through the planning process, with PPS 5 allowing for the protection of sites which are deemed to be of national importance, regardless of whether or

not they are scheduled, and this is an appropriate mechanism for the management of this archaeological area, which exists at a landscape scale. Agri-environmental schemes have also been an important way of securing protection of non-designated but significant archaeological landscape features.

CONCLUSION: After examining all the records and other relevant information and having carefully considered the national importance of this case, the criteria for scheduling are fulfilled in the case of the moated site only. The large areas of ridge and furrow cultivation around the parish, though of national importance, are not recommended for scheduling as this is not considered the most appropriate tool for their management.

REASONS FOR DESIGNATION DECISION

The Willoughby moated site south of Manor House Farm is considered to be of national importance. It is recommended for scheduling for the following principal reasons:

- * Archaeological interest: the site is a medieval moated site, a class of monument which is important for the understanding of the distribution of wealth and status in the countryside; they are generally of national importance where they survive well
- * Survival: the moated site is apparently unaltered, and has not been excavated or otherwise disturbed
- * Potential: the site has significant potential within the waterlogged deposits in the ditches, and in the largely undisturbed island, for both occupation and environmental evidence
- * Historic interest: it forms part of the former medieval settlement, and sits within an extensive landscape of medieval ridge and furrow, which is itself of national importance, though not included within the scheduling

The ridge-and-furrow landscape within the field off Moor Lane known variously as Big Grounds and land at Pear Tree Farm, is not recommended for scheduling, for the following principal reasons:

- * Archaeological: the site under assessment is not immediately adjacent to the likely area of the former medieval settlement, but is at its western edge, and forms only a small part of the much wider medieval open field system, which is identifiable by the large areas of ridge and furrow which survive surrounding the modern village: it represents only an isolated sample
- * Survival: though it contains a range of features of interest, it is not complete, with part of the site having previously been levelled as a paddock, and the south-western furlong truncated by Moor Lane
- * Management considerations: although the entire extensive ridge-and-furrow landscape surrounding the village is of national importance for the scale and extent of its survival, scheduling is not generally an appropriate management regime for such large areas of agricultural land

Countersigning comments:

Agreed. The moated site south of Manor Farm House survives particularly well and has high archaeological potential. The rich documentary evidence for the settlement in the area provides a strong historic background which will complement the archaeological potential of the site. As a relatively sophisticated moated site, it displays diversity in its elements, with a double island and associated water management system. The later reuse of the site as an element of a later post medieval garden adds to its importance. The moated site fully merits designation as a scheduled monument.

The field of ridge and furrow cultivation at Pear Tree Farm, whilst of importance as an element of the wider open field system which lies around the village of Willoughby, does not merit scheduling in isolation. Its significance in the wider landscape is, however, noted.

22 September 2011

Deborah Williams

Annex 1

Proposed List Entry

List Entry Summary

This monument is scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as amended as it appears to the Secretary of State to be of national importance.

Name: Moated site S of Manor Farm House

List Entry Number: 1404858

Location

Moated site approximately 118m south of Manor Farm House, just north of Moor Lane, Willoughby.

The monument may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County	District	District Type	Parish
Warwickshire	Rugby	District Authority	Willoughby

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: Not Applicable to this List Entry

Date first scheduled:

Date of most recent amendment:

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy Number: Not applicable to this List entry.

Asset Groupings

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description

Summary of Monument

A medieval moated site.

Reasons for Designation

- * Archaeological national importance: the site is a medieval moated site, a class of monument which is important for the understanding of the distribution of wealth and status in the countryside; they are generally of national importance where they survive well
- * Survival: the moated site is apparently unaltered, and has not been excavated or otherwise disturbed
- * Potential: the site has significant potential within the waterlogged deposits in the ditches, and in the largely undisturbed island, for both occupational and environmental evidence
- * Historic interest: it forms part of the former medieval settlement, and sits within an extensive landscape of medieval ridge and furrow, which is itself of national importance, though not included within the scheduling

History

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 central and eastern parts of England. However, moated sites were built throughout the medieval period, are widely scattered throughout England and exhibit a high level of diversity in their forms and sizes. They form a significant class of medieval monument and are important for the understanding of the distribution of wealth and status in the countryside. Many examples provide conditions favourable to the survival of organic remains.

The moated site at Willoughby is situated to the south of the C18 Manor Farm House and to the south-west of the early-C16 parish church. It is considered to be a medieval homestead moat which may have been occupied by an earlier manor house. There is considerable documentary evidence recorded for settlement at Willoughby which reflects a complex history of land ownership in the area; although none of the records can be firmly tied to the moated site itself.

The moat appears to have been incorporated into a C19 garden scheme for the manor house, shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1886, where a line of trees along the western edge of the paddock in which the moat sits had been planted along a path reaching from the garden at the rear of the house to the north-western corner of the moat. The moated site is shown in its current form on this map. It remains part of the wider garden of Manor Farm House.

Details

A medieval homestead moat, situated at the southern end of a field approximately 118m to the south of Manor Farm and measuring roughly 55m by 67m in total. The wide ditches, which remain waterlogged, enclose a rectangular island. At the south-eastern corner of the site, the ditches project eastwards slightly to enclose a second, smaller island which may have been used for waterfowl. It is understood that the moat was spring-fed, although a leat entering at the north-west corner of the site may have supplemented the water supply. The outlet is visible at the south-western corner. The ditches vary in width between about 5m and about 14m, and they are between 1m to 2m in depth. The principal island is circa 0.8 hectares in area, and the smaller island covers circa 25 square metres. The field in which the moated site is located contains a number of distinct earthworks whose purpose is not known; they may relate to features forming part of an earlier garden for the manor and are not included in the scheduling.

Selected Sources

Moat 200 S of Church, Willoughby: Warwickshire HER record MWA3055

Shrunken medieval settlement at Willoughby: Warwickshire HER record MWA6395

Willoughby Manor (manor Farm) garden, Willoughby: Warwickshire HER record MWA12706

Benchmark Archaeology, Land at Pear Tree Farm, Moor Lane, Willoughby, Warwickshire: an assessment of the Significance of the Ridge and Furrow and other Historic Landscape Components, 2011

Map**National Grid Reference:** SP5155167264

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The above map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - 1404858_1.pdf