

EXTRACT FROM ENGLISH HERITAGE'S RECORD OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

MONUMENT: Medieval hunting lodge 620m NNW of Holly Hatch Cottage

PARISH: FORDINGBRIDGE

DISTRICT: NEW FOREST

COUNTY: HAMPSHIRE

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 30268

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SU21041250

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes the remains of a medieval hunting lodge within Sloden Inclosure situated on the southern side of a gravel ridge 620m NNW of Holly Hatch Cottage in the New Forest.

The location of the lodge is indicated by earthwork banks and an external ditch which enclose a square raised platform measuring approximately 37m across. The banks are a maximum of 3m in width and up to 0.85m in height. The possible location of internal structures is suggested by widening of the bank at the southern and eastern corners of the platform to form two mounds each up to 5m in diameter and 0.7m in height. Fragmentary traces of an external ditch measuring a maximum of 3m in width and up to 0.3m in depth are visible on the north eastern and south western sides of the monument in the vicinity of a later trackway which has bisected and disturbed it.

Limited excavation in 1915 found no evidence for structures within the enclosure, on the basis of which the excavator suggested that it was for keeping stock. However, its location in close proximity to other known medieval hunting lodges and the similarity in both its form and dimensions strongly indicate that it fulfilled the same function.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

Forests in the medieval period were tracts of land subject to forest law, and generally outside the common law of the land. In fact, the term 'forest', by today's meaning, is something of a misnomer as only about one-fifth of legal forest was actually woodland. Forest law was a system devised to preserve, for the king's amusement and profit, certain designated animals and the trees and pasture which provided shelter and sustenance for them. The main animals hunted were fallow deer, red deer, roe deer and wild boar. Forests had special officials and courts assigned to them; the laws were strictly enforced and provided the king with a steady income from rents, goods and fines. However, the management and exploitation of forest resources also entailed some expenditure. Game were often enclosed within a park pale, a massive fenced or hedged bank, sometimes with an internal ditch, and hunting lodges, usually moated, were built in the forests to provide temporary accommodation for visiting royalty or nobility.

Like deer parks, the establishment of hunting forests peaked between the end of the 12th and the middle of the 14th centuries, at which point it is estimated to have covered a third of England. The creation of royal forest led

to significant changes in the landscape, including the abandonment and destruction of many existing villages and farms.

Whilst documentary sources indicate that there were at least five hunting lodges in Hampshire forests other than the New Forest, possible locations for only two have been identified. Therefore, the seven lodge sites in the New Forest, which are well documented, combined with well preserved stretches of pale, represent a rare and unusually complete survival. As a group, these remains provide a rare opportunity to understand the management, development and use of a royal forest. As a consequence, all components with significant surviving remains are considered to be of national importance.

The remains of the hunting lodge 620m NNW of Holly Hatch Cottage survive in good condition with little significant disturbance. Despite the lack of evidence from limited excavations in 1915, archaeological deposits will survive providing information about the construction, layout and use of the lodge, its economy, the nature and extent of the structures related to it and the possible factors leading to its eventual decline and abandonment.

SCHEDULING HISTORY

Monument included in the Schedule on 13th September 1963 as:

COUNTY/NUMBER: Hampshire 286

NAME: Earthwork in Sloden Inclosure

The reference of this monument is now:

NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 30268

NAME: Medieval hunting lodge 620m NNW of Holly Hatch Cottage

SCHEDULING REVISED ON 19th March 1999