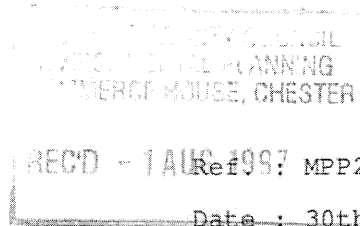


ENGLISH HERITAGE



County Archaeological Officer
Planning Department
Cheshire County Council
Commerce House
Hunter Street
CHESTER
CH1 1SN



MONUMENT NAME : Halton Castle: a ruined shell keep castle on the site of an earlier motte and bailey
DISTRICT : HALTON
COUNTY : CHESHIRE
MONUMENT NUMBER : 27611

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

Patricia T. Thompson
Scheduling Section
English Heritage

Encs: map extract, Schedule entry (where required)

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BATCH NUMBER: 10192

FILE REFERENCE: AA 106083/1

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: Halton Castle: a ruined shell keep castle on the site of an earlier motte and bailey

PARISH: HALTON

DISTRICT: HALTON

COUNTY: HALTON

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 27611

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE(S): SJ53778205

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

The monument includes the ruined castle remains at Halton together with an area to the east of the castle which will retain buried deposits of midden material and the remains of secular settlement located immediately outside the castle.

The castle stands on a prominent hill of red sandstone and overlooks the estuary of the River Mersey to the north and east and the low marshlands at the foot of the hill on the western and eastern sides. It is in a strategic position overlooking the Runcorn Gap. Halton is one of a series of castles built on the sandstone ridges of Cheshire including to the south Beeston Castle.

The first castle on the site was a motte and bailey timber castle built by Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester, in c.1070. This was formed by cutting off the highest part of the promontory on the north western side by a ditch 8m wide and utilising the natural platform on the rest of the hilltop as a bailey. The castle was occupied by Nigel, the first baron of Halton, who also founded the priory at Norton.

In the subsequent three centuries the phases of building and rebuilding in stone are obscured since all rebuilding took place after scraping the previous phase off the bedrock and rebuilding on that foundation. Any surviving remains from these demolitions will lie at the bottom of the slope outside the curtain wall on the east, north and west sides. By c.1250 the curtain wall had been built, together with a square tower on the west side, over the ditch (which had been infilled), a round tower at the north end, and stone buildings in a range along the north western side. During this period, from the 11th to the 13th centuries, the ownership passed to the Lacy family, the Lords of Pontefract, who became Dukes of Lancaster in 1311. In the 15th century a gatehouse was constructed and a survey of 1476 mentions a number of buildings including a great chamber, a withdrawing room, a chapel, a hall and a number of lesser domestic buildings on the site.

The castle was used as a prison for Roman Catholic recusants in 1579. It was besieged and captured by Sir William Broton in 1643 and partly demolished on Cromwells orders in 1644. The castle was depicted in a view by the Buck

(Continued ..)

AUTHORISED BY: A R Middleton

On behalf of the Secretary of State for National Heritage under batch no: 10192

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT (Continued)

brothers in 1727 as a ruin.

In 1738 the gatehouse was replaced by a new courthouse and prison and a series of small lock-ups built in the castle interior to the north of this building. Again the previous remains were cleared from the bedrock on the site and the new building erected on the platform.

The site was investigated by excavation in 1986-7 and nine trenches were uncovered mainly in the north and west of the site. The standing remains are interpreted here in the light of these excavations. Nothing remains of the early timber phase of the buildings and the ditch of the early motte site was filled in in the 13th century. The curtain wall, which surrounded the castle platform, only survives as foundations with some courses of stone remaining on the north west side and the south side up to the west wall of the courthouse building. The best preserved section is to the west of the square tower remains on the north west wall. The rounded plan of the western end of the site suggest a stone built shell keep.

The stone tower dates from the 13th century and measures 12m square at the base with walls up to 2.75m thick. Next to this tower are the foundations of a building which is interpreted as a kitchen range with a serving hatch in its east wall. Little of the buildings survives above ground.

In the 18th century the walls of a folly were constructed to the east of the courthouse where they still form a castellated feature. In the interior of the platform there is now a walled garden dating from the 19th century and the cells of the 18th century lock-ups have been incorporated in the east side of this enclosure. In addition, the eastern half of the enclosure was laid out as a bowling green in the 19th century levelling the interior and obscuring the remains of any earlier buildings.

The castle ruins are Listed Grade I.

Two concrete platforms for pavilions for the bowling green in the centre of the site are excluded in the scheduling, although the ground beneath them is included.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE

A shell keep castle is a masonry enclosure, extending around the top of an earlier motte or castle ringwork, and replacing the existing timber palisades; there are a few cases where the wall is built lower down the slope or even at the bottom. The enclosure is usually rounded or sub-rounded but other shapes are also known. A shell keep is relatively small, normally between 15 and 25m diameter, with few buildings, and perhaps one tower only, within its interior. Shell keeps were built over a period of about 150 years, from not long after the Norman Conquest until the mid-13th century; most were built in the 12th century. They provided strongly fortified residences for the king or leading families and occur in both urban and rural situations.

Shell keep castles are widely dispersed throughout England with a marked concentration in the Welsh Marches. The distribution also extends into Wales and to a lesser extent into Scotland. They are rare nationally with only 71 recorded examples. Considerable diversity of form is exhibited with no two examples being exactly alike. Along with other castle types, they are major

(Continued ..)

AUTHORISED BY: A R Middleton

On behalf of the Secretary of State for National Heritage under batch no: 10192

DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL HERITAGE BATCH NUMBER: 10192

Continued from previous page ..

NATIONAL MONUMENT NO: 27611

ASSESSMENT OF IMPORTANCE (Continued)

medieval monument types which, belonging to the highest levels of society, frequently acted as major administrative centres and formed the foci for developing settlement patterns. Castles generally provide an emotive and evocative link to the past and can provide a valuable education resource, both with respect to medieval warfare and defence, and to wider aspects of medieval society. All examples retaining significant remains of medieval date are considered to be nationally important.

The present castle dates from the 13th century but it is clear from excavations that it supercedes a motte and bailey castle which occupied the north western side of the site. This form of castle was introduced by the Normans and consisted of a mound of earth capped by a timber fortification. A ditch was cut into the bedrock on the east side and the attached bailey occupied the rest of the crown of the hill.

The ruins of the castle at Halton survive well despite the later insertion of a courthouse on the site of the gatehouse and the creation of a folly garden within the ruins. It has within the western half of the interior the buried remains of an extensive range of late medieval domestic buildings as well as the remains of six lock-ups from the 18th century refurbishment of the site as a courthouse and prison. Excavation during 1986-7 has revealed that much of the site retains buried deposits of the earlier phases of occupation of the castle. The castle is a prominent local landmark. When it is considered together with the priory and later abbey at Norton and the remains of the medieval village of Norton, it is clear that here are the vestiges of an extensive surviving medieval landscape. Many of the features of this landscape survive in an area of extensive 20th century development for the new towns of Widnes and Runcorn.

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 26th November 1963 as:
COUNTY/NUMBER: Cheshire 2
NAME: Halton Castle

The reference of this monument is now:

NATIONAL MONUMENT NUMBER: 27611

NAME: Halton Castle: a ruined shell keep castle on the site of an earlier motte and bailey

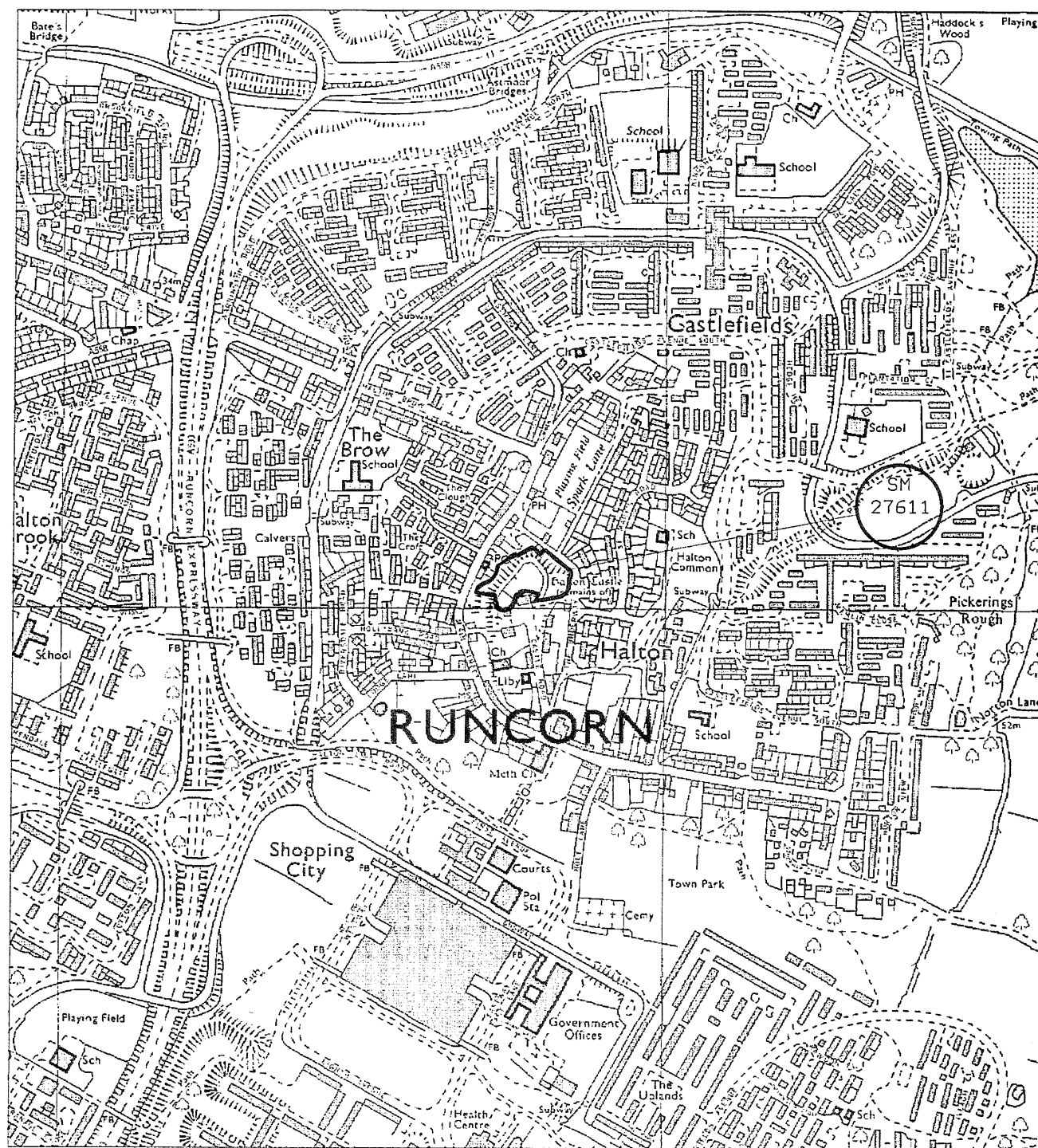
SCHEDULING REVISED ON 22nd July 1997

AUTHORISED BY: A R Middleton

On behalf of the Secretary of State for National Heritage under batch no: 10192

Scheduled Monument

82



©Crown copyright reserved

54

For identification purposes only

Site Name: Halton Castle: a ruined shell keep castle on the site of an earlier motte and bailey

County: Cheshire

District: Halton

Parish: Halton

Notes: Site contains listed building - grade I
For exclusions - see text record

Key: Monument No. Location/extent of site



Scale: 1:10000 **Derived from:** 1:10000

Centred on NGR: SJ53778205

Extract from OS sheet: SJ58SW

Date: 27.11.96

Monument No: SM27611

English Heritage

Fortress House 23 Savile Row London W1X 1AB Telephone 071-973 3000 Fax 071-973 3001

Cheshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record



15/10/01

SMR Number	Site Name	Record Type
104/1	Halton Castle: ruined shell keep castle on	Monument

Administrative Area

Civil Parish HALTON, HALTON, CHESHIRE

National Grid Reference

SJ53778205 Area

Site details

Medieval castle

Type and Date

WALL	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD
DITCH	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD
TOWER	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD
GREAT HALL	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD
GATEHOUSE	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD
CHAPEL	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD
MOTTE	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD
BAILEY	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD
CASTLE	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD
TOWN	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD
SITE	- to

Evidence

STRUCTURE,
EARTHWORK

Status and other references

Original Reference Number - 104/1/0

SMR Reference (Old) - 2/AR-011

Scheduled Monument - 27611

Listed Building (I)

Conservation Area

Description

Halton Castle. Stands on prominent rocky hill overlooking River Mersey. Origins prob as motte & bailey blt by Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester, c.1070, for Nigel, 1st Baron of Halton (1). Passed to Lascy family, Lords of Pontefract, C13, & created Dukes of Lancaster 1311. Barony & crown united 1398. Documentary records indicate blg work during C14 & C15. Gatehouse blt 1450-7. Survey of 1476 mentions greater chamber, withdrawing room, chapel, hall, auditors chamber, kitchen, larder & storehouse (2). Summary of documentary history (3). Continued in use in post medieval times. 1562, Sir Ambrose Cave, viewed state of Duchy's Castles, but drawing of Halton now lost (4). Was prison for recusants 1579. Beseiged & captured by Sir William Brereton 1643. Extensive damage & some dismantling on Cromwell's orders 1644. Buck Bros' view of castle in ruins of 1727 (1). Main gate house replaced by courthouse & prison 1738, now Castle Hotel (5&6). Major excns 1986-7 by R McNeil revealed complex of features but Ruined castle remains with an area to the E of castle which will retain buried deposits of midden material & remains of settlement located outside castle. 1st castle was motte & bailey, built by Hugh Lupus c.1070, formed by cutting off highest part of promontory on NW side by a ditch 8m wide. In following 3 centuries building phases in stone are obscured since previous phases were scraped off bedrock. By c.1250 curtain wall had been built, square tower on W side, round tower at N end & stone blgs in range along NW side. In 15th C gatehouse built & survey of 1476 mentions a great chamber, withdrawing room, chapel, & hall. Used as prison for RC recusants in 1579. Captured & partly destroyed in Civil war. Shown by Buck brothers as ruin in 1727. 1738 new courthouse, prison & small lock-ups. Site exc 1986-7. In 18th C a folly was built to E of courthouse. In 19th C walled garden & bowling green laid out in interior (11).

Sources

Copyright Cheshire County Council zMonFullRpt

Cheshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record



15/10/01

- (11) Schedule Entry (Scheduled Ancient Monuments Description), , English Heritage, , 27611, 1997
- (1) The History of Cheshire, , Ormerod G, , 1/ 1882
- (2) The History of the King's Works, , Allen Brown R Colvin H & Taylor A, 1963, 2/667
- (3) The History of the Castle of Halton, , Beaumont W, 1886,
- (4) The Artist & the Country House, , Harris J, 1979, 19
- (5) Transactions of the Lancashire & Cheshire Antiquarian Society, , , 1876, /135 Gomme A H 1986
- (6) Halton Castle : A Visual Treasure, , McNeil R (ed), 1987,
- (7) The Buildings of England: Cheshire, , Pevsner N & Hubbard E, 1971, /232
- (8) List of Buildings of Special Arch & Historic Interest, , DOE, ,
- (9) OS Record Card, , , , White J 1964 SJ58SW5
- (10) The Barons of Halton, , Whimperley A, 1986,

Associated Finds

Find Type	Period	Material
UNIDENTIFIED OBJECT	Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD	POTTERY
VESSEL	Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1900 AD	POTTERY
TOBACCO PIPE	Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1900 AD	CLAY
ANIMAL REMAINS	AD 16TH CENTURY - 1500 AD to 1599 AD	BONE
ARCHITECTURAL FRAGMENT	AD 15TH CENTURY - 1400 AD to 1499 AD	SANDSTONE

Cheshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record



15/10/01

SMR Number	Site Name	Record Type
104/1/1	Halton Castle: ruined shell keep castle on	Monument

Administrative Area

Civil Parish HALTON, HALTON, CHESHIRE

National Grid Reference

SJ53778205

Site details

Lower Bailey Curtain Wall

Type and Date

CURTAIN WALL Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD
CASTLE Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD
TOWN Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD

Evidence

Status and other references

Sites & Monuments Record - 104/1/1

Scheduled Monument - 27611

Listed Building (I)

Description

Consolidation works carried out at Halton Castle between 1994 and 1997 allowed observation of test pits and contractors trenches behind the collapsing and slumping 19th century east curtain wall of the Lower Bailey. Various sections of medieval walling were recorded. Wall 1 recorded February and July 1995 in section 15 of the curtain wall, extending into the interior of the lower bailey. 1.8m high x 5.4m long ashlar courses of large sandstone blocks on a foundation plinth of roughly dressed sandstone with a chamfer at the east end. Masons marks suggest Medieval date (1 & 2). In July 1995 during work on section 14 of the curtain wall, an inner face of the curtain wall (wall 2) was observed, together with masonry of ashlar sandstone blocks with a midden or garderobe chute (wall 3). Masonry marks suggest a medieval date for wall 3 (2). In October 1995 during work on section 13 of the curtain wall, a length of surviving ashlar wall of possibly medieval date was exposed. Also masonry blocks of squared ashlar blocks - possibly the foundations of a half-round tower marked on the Randle-Holme sketch of 1645 (3). In May 1997 during work on section 12 of the curtain wall, the interior face of a length of surviving medieval masonry was exposed (4). These walls suggest that the outer bailey had a series of structures of different dates arranged within the curtain wall. It is possible that some stretches of the present 19th century wall incorporate the walling of these structures and the 19th century wall may have replaced an earlier curtain wall which may have collapsed down the steep slope surrounding the castle (5).

Sources

- (6) Schedule Entry (Scheduled Ancient Monuments Description), , English Heritage, , 27611, 1997
- (7) List of Buildings of Special Arch & Historic Interest, , DOE, , 5/28
- (1) Halton Castle, Consolidation Works. Archaeological Watching Briefs to feb 28 1995, R2195, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, 1995,
- (2) Halton Castle, Runcorn. Arch Watching Brief, Consolidation Works to the Curtain Wall, Stage 3, G1358; R2196, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, 1995,
- (3) Halton Castle, Runcorn. Arch Watching Brief During Consolidation Works to the Curtain Wall, G1364; R2192, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, 1995,
- (4) Halton Castle, Archaeological Watching Brief During Consolidation Works to the Curtain Wall, G1380; R2193, Gwynedd Archaeological trust, 1997,
- (5) Halton Castle, Halton. Drawn Archaeological Record Prior to Consolidation Work, G1258; R2194, Gwynedd Archaeological Trust, 1994,

Associated Finds

Cheshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record



15/10/01

SMR Number	Site Name	Record Type
104/1/2	Halton Castle: ruined shell keep castle on	Monument

Administrative Area

Civil Parish HALTON, HALTON, CHESHIRE

National Grid Reference

SJ53778205

Site details

Upper Bailey Curtain Wall

Type and Date

CURTAIN WALL Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD
CASTLE Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD
TOWN Medieval - 1066 AD to 1539 AD
SITE - to

Evidence

STRUCTURE

Status and other references

Sites & Monuments Record - 104/1/2

Scheduled Monument - 27611

Listed Building (I)

Description

Consolidation works carried out at Halton Castle in 1997 allowed recording of the Curtain Wall to the SW of the Tower on the northern side of the Upper Bailey Curtain Wall. Section 5 has a blocked pointed arched doorway 1.5m wide x 2.5m high with a possible sill (1).

Sources

- (1) Halton Castle, Archaeological Watching Brief During Consolidation Works to the Curtain Wall, G1380:R2193, Gwynedd Archaeological trust, 1997, R2193
- (2) Schedule Entry (Scheduled Ancient Monuments Description), , English Heritage, , 27611, 1997
- (3) List of Buildings of Special Arch & Historic Interest, , DOE, , 5/28

Associated Finds

Find Type	Period	Material