

Riber

Conservation Area Appraisal

3. Archaeological Significance



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Historic Environment Record

This is a non-statutory designation afforded to sites of known archaeological interest. The Historic Environment Record is maintained by Derbyshire County Council. Included sites and their settings receive protection through the land use policies of the statutory Local Plan.

The Historic Environment Record contains only a few references to Riber and its immediate vicinity. The HERs are as follows –

Riber Hall – 10032

Hirst Stones – 10023

Manor House – 10033

Riber Castle – 10069

Earthworks, holloway, field boundary & house platform – 10060

Orthostatic field wall - 10061

There are no designated Scheduled Monuments in the settlement, or its immediate vicinity, however, this does not negate any, currently un-identified, archaeological deposits being in existence/discovered.

The ‘cromlech’, briefly described in the previous section, was undoubtedly the earliest man-made feature in the vicinity. Records, by local and regional antiquarians, in the later 18th and early 19th centuries confirm its existence. In 1887 an enthusiast researched its history and tried to find its remains on the ground. Whilst he considered that he had pin-pointed its location he found nothing of any note recording that it had been almost totally removed and mutilated (being used, presumably, for house building and wall construction).

It is probable that a settlement began to be formed at Riber as early as the 13th century, however no physical remains survive. The earliest surviving built fabric dates from the latter part of the 16th century (Manor House, west wing). As an agricultural settlement the surrounding land was enclosed and the resulting field pattern formed. The 1784 enclosure map depicts some of the field boundaries surrounding the settlement. Many of these have survived but some have been altered and lost over time. The large field to the east of Riber Hall may have been part of a small ‘park’, however, the land contains no picturesque tree planting clumps or groupings which would signify this. Its name – ‘Kiln Croft’ – suggests that some light industrial activity may once have taken place on this piece of land. The aerial photographs reveal no existing ridge & furrow in the area.

The current road & lane layout/system of the settlement has early origins and relates to the topography of the area. The roads/lanes are generally narrow, some with high sides (often referred to as ‘holloways’). As a fossilized network this has some archaeological, and historical, importance to the character and appearance of the village.

In the surrounding landscape to the village the early maps indicate a small number of ponds or bodies of water. Most of these have now dried up. The 1880 OS map indicates the presence of at least four wells within the settlement indicating its source(s) of fresh water. Whilst some of these may now be visually lost, their presence (and structure) may remain below ground level or have been capped off at a later date.

The historic maps indicate that a few buildings have been lost over time. Their former locations are marked on Figure 8. It is probable that these sites may still retain archaeological deposits which may be of significance and interest should any modern development or below ground services cause them to be disturbed.

Within the village framework there is a reasonable expectation that archaeological deposits and evidence relating to the medieval and post-medieval periods survive below ground. Such evidence may be brought to light during excavation work for new services or new dwellings/extensions.



Early 20th century view of Riber Castle surmounting the escarpment (notice the relative sparsity of trees).