

Redbrook

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Introduction

Redbrook is located where the A495 joins the A525 between Wrexham and Whitchurch in Shropshire. Wrexham is around 20km to the north-west while the English border is less than 400m to the east. The equally small and undistinguished settlement of Whitewell lies just to the west. The land drops gently from the flattish plateau that forms much of Maelor Saesneg to the valley of the Red Brook. The hamlet occupies a shelf on this slope.

This brief report examines the background to Redbrook up to the years around 1750. For the more recent history of the settlement, it may be necessary to examine other sources of information and particularly for the origins and nature of some of the buildings within it.

The accompanying map is offered solely as an indicative guide to the modern settlement. No historic core boundary has been created as it is not possible to define a pre-1750 core for Redbrook. The map does not show those areas or buildings that are statutorily designated, nor does it pick out those sites or features that are specifically mentioned in the text.

We have not referenced the sources that have been examined to produce this report, but that information will be available in the Historic Environment Record (HER) maintained by the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust. Numbers in brackets are primary record numbers adopted in the HER to provide researchers with information that is specific to the individual sites and features. These can be accessed on-line through the Archwilio website (www.archwilio.org.uk).

History of development

Nothing is known of the history of Redbrook. As a place-name it has failed to trouble the specialists, and in the Welsh archives it features only because a 19th-century land surveyor, Joseph Lee, resided there. The earliest record that has been encountered is from 1769 and relates to the Whitchurch turnpike road at a time when it may have been the watercourse rather than any settlement there that was considered important.

The settlement's name is obviously a back formation from that of the stream which here forms the boundary between England and Wales, but how far back in time it goes and whether it refers to no more than the colour of the water in that stream has not been ascertained.

The earliest, admittedly small-scale, maps to name and show Redbrook are John Evans' map of north Wales in 1795 and the Ordnance Survey surveyors' map of 1829. Both suggest a thin scatter of houses around this junction of two turnpike roads and a little later at the time of the Tithe survey in 1840 the hamlet appeared almost precisely as it does today.

A few extra buildings around The Beeches, the enlargement of Redbrook Lodge Hotel and the construction of a couple of new cottages beside the A525 are the sole changes in the last one hundred and fifty years.

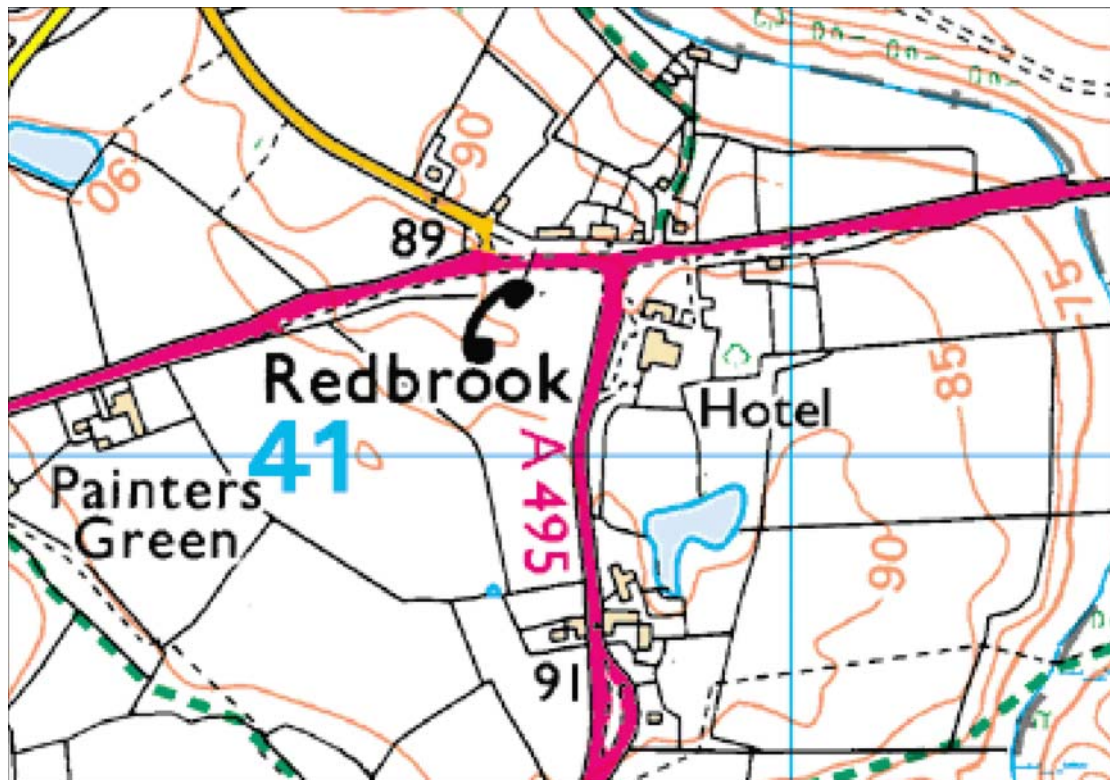
The heritage to 1750

The present Redbrook House, 250m south of the road junction, originated as a late 16th-century timber-framed building to which a new front was added in the late 18th century.

There is a suggestion too that the hotel by the junction may have a 17th-century core but this has not been verified. Otherwise the only other structure of any age is Redbrook Bridge (105304) providing the crossing into England which may have been constructed by Thomas Telford in the early 19th century.

Nothing of archaeological interest has previously been recorded here. One field (OS no.8800) immediately to the south of Redbrook Lodge seems to show a terraced hollow as well as a fairly distinctive mound, though the significance of these earthworks has not been determined.

There is a 19th-century reference to a possible moated site (101329) near Upper House in Redbrook but the house name is not known locally, the site cannot now be identified and the credibility of the reference remains untested.



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