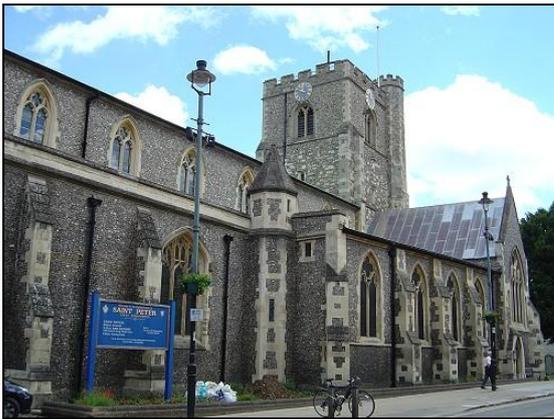


Berkhamsted Conservation Area

Character Appraisal & Management Proposals



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Front cover photos from left to right: (top) St. Peter's Church, High Street; houses on Chapel Street; (bottom) narrow boats on the Grand Union Canal; view of the houses along Shrublands Avenue (west side)

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Part 1 Conservation Area Character Appraisal

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Berkhamsted Conservation Area is defined by the linear town settlement of the High Street, which lies south of the railway line (West Coast Main Line), the River Bulbourne and the Grand Union Canal. North of the railway line stands the historic Berkhamsted Castle that is surrounded by a series of bank and ditch earthworks. Beyond the linear High Street (mainly to the south) are a series of densely terraced residential streets that are bounded by later sub-urban roads and housing estates.
- 1.2 Berkhamsted is a viable and prosperous provincial market town in Dacorum Borough. As set out in the Town Centre Strategy for Berkhamsted, the Council's aim is to *conserve and enhance the town centre environment with particular reference to retention of its appearance, character and atmosphere as a small county town centre..... [and] to address the problems of the 1990s post-bypass era* (Berkhamsted Town Centre Strategy; spatial planning. Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991 - 2011).
- 1.3 The historical development of Berkhamsted has been influenced by the natural valley landscape and the River Bulbourne, together with the impact of human development by way of Berkhamsted Castle, the Grand Union Canal and the railway line. The plan of Berkhamsted town centre is typical of a medieval market settlement; the linear High Street forms the spine of the town (roughly aligned east-west), from which extend medieval burgage plots (to the north and south). At the centre stands the Parish Church (the thirteenth century Church of St. Peter) along with the triangular market-place (the old Market Place, recorded as *Le Shopperowe* in 1357). The majority of High Street buildings date to between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries and are mostly commercial premises (such as shops, restaurants, banks, offices, public houses), places of worship and public buildings with a smaller number of residential properties. Later streets were laid out on the valley sides away from the High Street according to need (a growing population), and were influenced by the existing plots / field systems and the landscape topography. These streets were mainly built during the nineteenth century and predominantly lay to the southwest of the High Street, with some lying close to the areas occupied by the Grand Union Canal and the railway line.
- 1.4 According to a Supplementary Planning Guidance document prepared by Dacorum Borough Council (May 2004), Berkhamsted Conservation Area was divided into three 'Identity Areas' for *the purposes of character appraisal of problems and opportunities, subsequent analysis and policy formation...[as] each area has its own distinctive characteristics as part of the overall conservation area*: High Street (Area 1 - commercial & residential), Grand Union Canal (Area 2 - industrial and residential) and Charles Street (Area 3 - residential). This appraisal has utilised these three areas, and has further subdivided the 'Identity Areas' for ease of discussion in this report (see Chapter 6: Character Areas).
- 1.5 Berkhamsted Conservation Area is inevitably subject to pressures. Development opportunities within the boundary is somewhat limited, however the Town Centre Strategy recognises that the market town is experiencing *an important period of change.... [where] new out-of-town shopping centres.... offer a serious challenge to the future of town centre shopping* (Berkhamsted Town Centre Strategy; spatial planning. Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991 - 2011). *Pressures exist for commercial and retail infrastructure development that is in conflict with, and can be out of scale with, the town centre's environmental quality, in particular its small country town character* (Berkhamsted Town Centre Strategy; spatial planning. Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991 - 2011). Residential use of upper floors of existing retail premises

was seen as offering residential accommodation within the town centre; the Government initiative 'Living Over the Shop' aimed to encourage this (Berkhamsted Town Centre Strategy; spatial planning. Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991 - 2011). However, recent large-scale residential developments have been built both within and on the edge of the conservation area; flats, terraces and semi-detached houses on former commercial or industrial sites (Stag Lane, Robertson Road). In addition, further large-scale housing schemes are being proposed (New Lodge at Bank Mill: H36; The South Berkhamsted Concept; Egerton Rothsay / Durrants Lane). Under these proposals the increase in population will bring added pressures for greater amenities and the need for improvements to the existing infrastructure. This could have a huge impact upon the existing layout of the historic town centre; shopping areas could be at risk of being up-graded and this would impact upon the character and appearance of Berkhamsted Conservation Area.

- 1.6 In 2007 a 'Concept Statement for Water Lane / High Street Berkhamsted' was commissioned and adopted by Dacorum Borough Council. It was drawn up to guide developers in any proposals for the re-development of land on the north side of the High Street at the centre of the town, and would be used by the Council as a framework for assessing any future planning applications for the site. This includes the area occupied by shops between The Wilderness (160 High Street, Tesco's) and 176 High Street (Altered Image / Fitness First), Water Lane car park, and the access road through to Greenfield Road.
- 1.7 **Berkhamsted Conservation Area was first designated in 1969, and was subsequently revised and extended in 1994 and again in 2009** (Map 2). Conservation areas are designated under the provisions of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. A conservation area is defined as "*an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*".
- 1.8 Section 71 of the same Act requires local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of these conservation areas. Section 72 also specifies that, in making a decision on an application for development in a conservation area, special attention should be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.
- 1.9 Although new development and change will always take place in conservation areas, the main purpose of designation is to ensure that any proposals will not have an adverse effect upon the overall character and appearance of an area. Part 1 of this report (The "Appraisal") highlights the special qualities and features that underpin Berkhamsted's character and justify its designation. Guidelines provided in Part 2 ("Management Proposals") are designated to prevent harm and encourage enhancement. This type of assessment conforms to English Heritage Guidance and to Government Advice (PPS 5). It also supports and amplifies those policies aimed at protecting the overall character of the conservation area and forming part of Dacorum Borough Council's Local Planning Framework (Pre-Submission Core Strategy):

Policy 120.1 Designation as a conservation area provides the opportunity to preserve or enhance an area of architectural or historic interest by controlling building demolition and the design, scale and proportions of extensions and new development, as well as the type and colour of materials used.

Policy 121.1 There is a need to control inappropriate types of permitted development which would be detrimental to a conservation area.
(Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991 – 2011)
- 1.10 This character appraisal of Berkhamsted Conservation Area is as inclusive and accurate as possible, however it is not exhaustive. Not every building or architectural feature, positive or negative element, urban or green space, commercial / industrial / residential use has been commented upon. Each site is an individual case, but any

change will have a wider effect upon the overall character and appearance of the conservation area.

Listed Buildings

- 1.11 A listed building (or structure) is one that is included on the Government's Statutory List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. These buildings are protected by law and consent is required from Dacorum Borough Council before any works of alteration, extension or demolition can be carried out. The listed buildings are marked on the conservation area map (Maps 10 - 18) and are given in Appendix 1. Listed buildings former part of a wider group of nationally protected heritage sites, such as Scheduled Monuments, that are known as 'Designated Heritage Assets'.

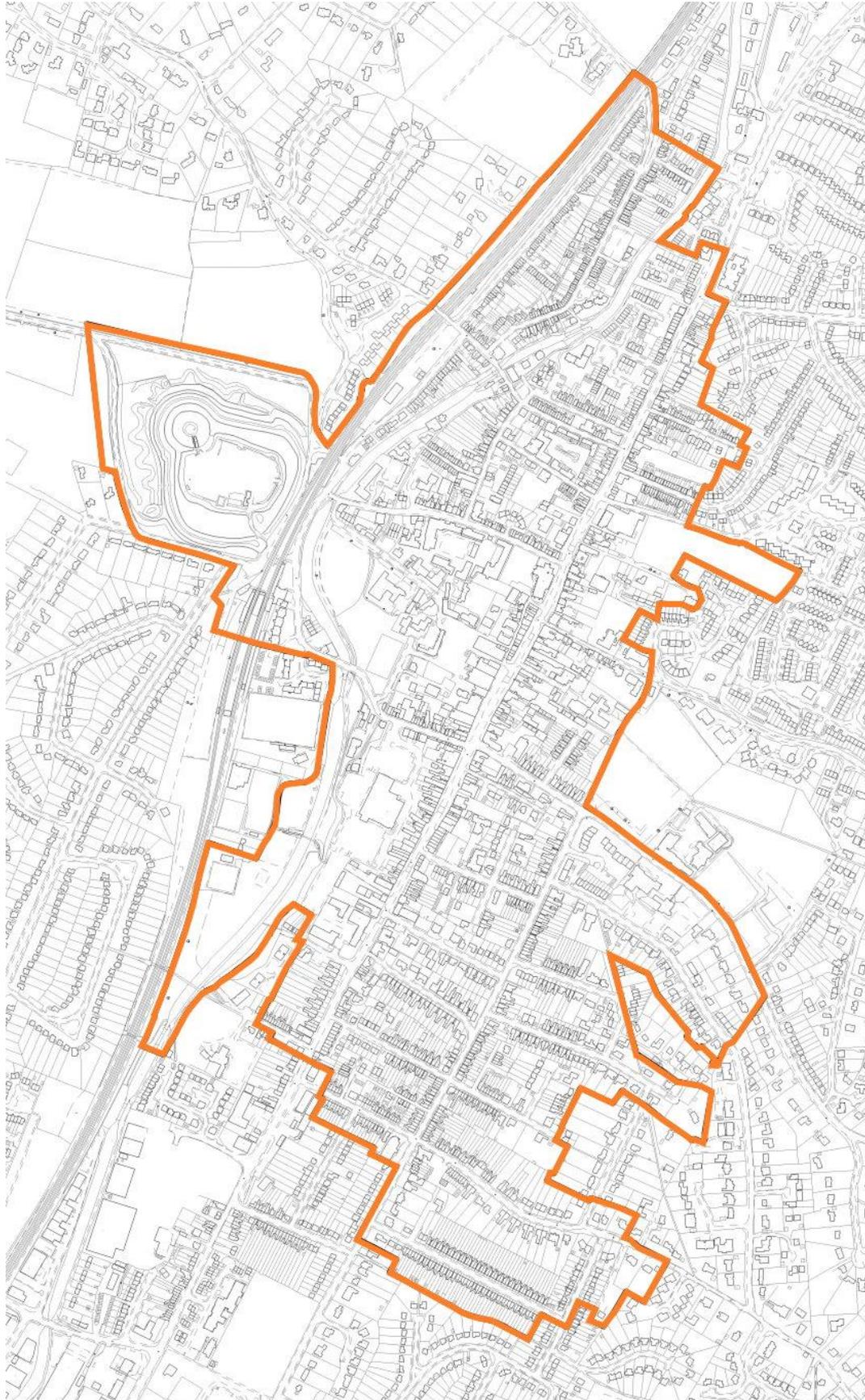
Locally Listed Buildings

- 1.12 These are buildings or structures that have been identified by Dacorum Borough Council as being individually of special architectural or historic interest but falling just 'beneath the line' for inclusion within the statutory list. They make a positive contribution to the special interest of the conservation area. Such buildings and structures of local importance are known as 'Un-designated Heritage Assets'.
- 1.13 Government guidance in PPS 5 advises that a general presumption exists in favour of retaining all Heritage Assets (designated and un-designated) which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of a conservation area. Heritage Assets have been positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions.
- 1.14 In Berkhamsted there are a number of such un-designated Heritage Assets proposed for inclusion on the local list. These are marked on the conservation area map (Maps 10 - 18) and are given in Appendix 2. Information on local listing and the proposed criteria for their inclusion on a local list are also provided (Appendix 3).
- 1.15 Exclusion from these two lists does not mean that a building is not of sufficient architectural or historic interest. Earlier fabric can often lie concealed behind later alterations. Always contact Dacorum Borough Council, for advice.

Article 4 (2) Directions

- 1.16 Article 4 (2) Directions are used to withdraw some permitted development rights, such as minor works or alterations to unlisted buildings, in the interest of preserving and enhancing the character and appearance of the conservation area.
- 1.17 Within Berkhamsted Conservation Area there are a number of adopted Article 4 (2) Directions. These are provided in Appendix 5.
- 1.18 This Appraisal shall also determine if further Article 4 (2) directions are required. Always contact Dacorum Borough Council for advice on designations.

Map 1: Berkhamsted Conservation Area



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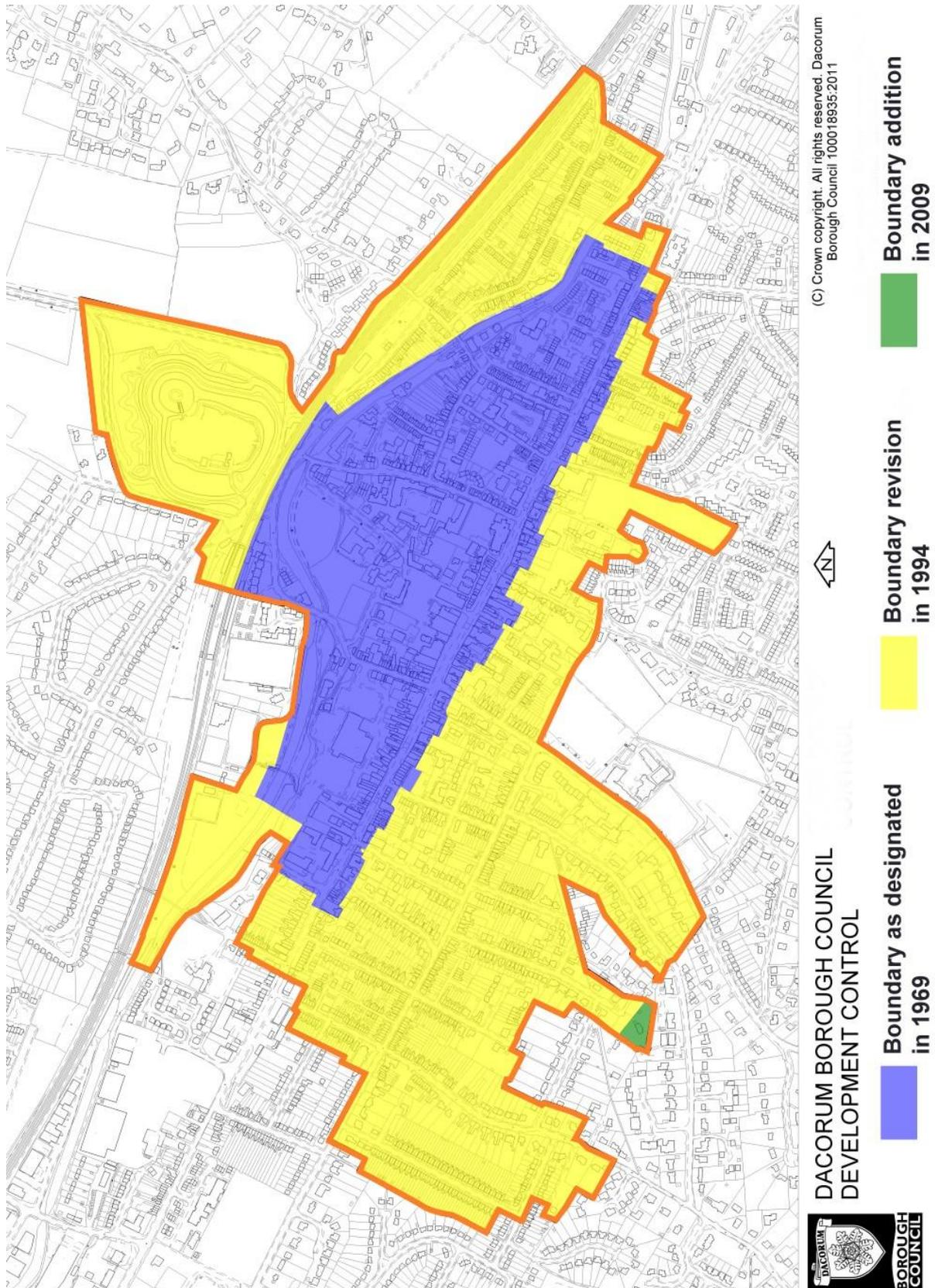
DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL





Aerial view of Berkhamsted Conservation Area (boundary outline in orange).
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Map 2: Berkhamsted Conservation Area. Boundary revisions



2.0 Location and Setting

Location

- 2.1 The historic medieval market town of Berkhamsted lies on the western edge of Hertfordshire, bordering the Chiltern Hills, within the Borough of Dacorum. It is one of three main town centres within the Borough and is bordered by a number of smaller settlements, mostly to the north. Berkhamsted lies approximately five miles west of Hemel Hempstead, the administrative centre of Dacorum, and seven miles southeast of Tring.
- 2.2 Berkhamsted is linear in shape and follows the Bulbourne river valley along the High Street / London Road. It is situated between the A41 bypass road (to the south) and the Birmingham to London West Coast rail line (to the north). The River Bulbourne runs parallel with the High Street between the town and the railway. The Grand Union Canal lies between the river and the rail line. Over the canal to the northeast stands Berkhamsted Castle.

Boundaries

- 2.3 The conservation area encompasses the historic centre of the town, the High Street / London Road, extending northward up to the West Coast rail line and a small area on the north side of the line to include Berkhamsted Castle. It stretches roughly as far east as Ivy House Lane and as far west as Cross Oak Road.
- 2.4 The boundary also incorporates plots lying on the south side of the High Street / London Road and a large residential area to the southwest beyond Kings Road, which includes Charles Street that runs parallel with the High Street. A number of roads leading southwards from Charles Street also lie within the conservation area; Doctor's Commons Road, North Road and Shrublands Avenue.
- 2.5 The conservation area does not include:
- Berkhamsted Lawn Tennis & Squash Rackets Club (BLTSRC) located to the west of the railway station between the canal and rail line
 - Greenes Court and Broadwater, a small residential area next to the BLTSRC
 - Berkhamsted Collegiate School situated along the east side of Kings Road
 - Anglefield Road (joins North Road to the east and Cross Oak Road to the west)
- 2.6 This Appraisal studied a series of suggestions for the proposed extension of the current conservation area boundary to include the following new areas:
- East: Old Mill Gardens up to Bank Mill Lane. This area should not be included as there had been significant in-fill development along this part of London Road that is out of character with the High Street form. The Mill is a statutory listed building but is included in the proposed extension (see below).
 - East: The remainder of George Street. The boundary should be extended to include the south side of George Street including Canal Court (see below).
 - South: Priory Gardens off Chesham Road. Although the modern residential development has an unusual but cohesive design, this area should not be included as its character was separate to that of the High Street and other

residential street forms such as Chesham Road. It is also shielded from view by a high wall and trees from the cemetery on Three Close Lane.

- South: Berkhamsted Collegiate School on Kings Road. Part of this site could be included in the conservation area (see below).
- South: Parts of Graemes Dyke Road and Anglefield Road (next to Pine Close). The part of Anglefield Road currently outside the conservation area boundary has houses of different character to those inside it and is not considered appropriate to alter the boundary here.
- South: 17 Anglefield Road. This substantial two storey house sits in a large garden adjoining the present conservation area boundary. It is accessed via a driveway from outside the conservation area and does not have a frontage to any street within it. The building is not visible from the public realm within the conservation area indeed only its roof is visible from the Anglefield footpath running alongside the house. For these reasons it has not been suggested for inclusion within a revised boundary.
- North: Land to the north side of the railway line from Gravel Path to Ivy House Lane (Rosebank, allotments, Sunnyside). These areas of twentieth century development are outside the urban centre of the town and lie beyond the topographical boundary of the railway line. Their character and appearance is not consistent with the special interest of the existing conservation area, but may be reviewed for designation of a separate conservation area.
- North: Land to the north side of the railway line between New Road and Gravel Path (White Hill). This area, although with some special interest, lies over the topographical boundary of the railway line. Should the Council decide to create a local list that included buildings of interest outside conservation area boundaries, some of these properties could be assessed for inclusion.
- North: Land to the west of the castle from Bridgewater Road and Castle Hill Road. These areas of twentieth century development (c1935) are outside the urban centre of the town and lie beyond the topographical boundary of the railway line. Their open, green, sub-urban character and appearance are not consistent with the special interest of the existing conservation area, and the location itself feels separate / away from the town centre. However, these sites may be reviewed for designation as a separate conservation area or their buildings assessed for inclusion in a wider ranging local list.

2.7 The study identified a small number of potential areas where the boundary of the conservation area might be extended, subject to public consultation (see below).

- West: The remainder of St. John's Well Court (1 – 12 & 13 – 24) not already within the boundary at the northwest corner of the conservation area (between Areas 1 and 2): the pond, the River Bulbourne and footbridge leading to and including the row of cottages at the north end of St. John's Well Lane (nos. 1 – 4).
- East: The extension would include the properties on the north side of London Road from The Old Mill up to and including Bullbeggars Lane, follow along Bullbeggars Lane north towards the railway line, and turn west along the north boundary of the meadows (the south side of the railway line) back towards George Street. It incorporates the larger part of Bank Mill, the River Bulbourne, and the Grand Union Canal, including canal bridge no. 144 and a listed lock-keepers cottage, 102 Bank Mill Lane. It does not include the north side of George Street up to the railway.
- South: Berkhamsted Collegiate School on Kings Road. An extension of the conservation area boundary is proposed which would encompass Butts Meadow

recreation ground, allotments and adjoining school buildings on Doctor's Commons Road. These are considered open spaces and buildings of visual and historic interest for the conservation area.

- South: To extend the existing boundary to include four semi-detached houses between North Road and Doctor's Commons Road off Angle Place (path): 29, 29a, and 31 & 33 Montague Road.

Topography

- 2.8 Berkhamsted lies within the Bulbourne river valley at approximately 115 metres above sea level and is surrounded by the Chilterns, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The valley sides ascend up to approximately 170 metres within less than a mile of the High Street. The High Street is roughly level along its length while the side streets leading southwards from the main road rise steeply (Highfield Road to Kitsbury Road). The side roads leading northwards from the High Street gently descend down towards the lowest point of the valley; the River Bulbourne and the Grand Union Canal (Holliday Street to Park Street).
- 2.9 Approximately three miles beyond the town to the north, the landscape is more open with an extensive area of wooded parkland that forms Berkhamsted Common which, along with Berkhamsted Castle at its southern tip, belongs to Area 119 (Berkhamsted Castle Farmland) of the Dacorum Landscape Character Assessment (HCC 2003). It is described as open pastoral farmland (predominantly sheep grazing) with arable farmland to the upper slopes, while close to the built edge of Berkhamsted are a number of playing fields (HCC 2003).
- 2.10 Adjacent to the north side of the common lies Ashridge Park Estate. This also comprises large areas of wooded parkland and forms Area 121 (Ashridge) of the Dacorum Landscape Character Assessment (HCC 2003). The assessment states that the primary land cover is a mix of extensive areas of woodland, both semi natural and plantation and grassland / pasture, while the land uses are amenity and recreation: walking, rambling, riding and two golf courses (HCC 2003).
- 2.11 The south side of the town lies within The Ashlyns and Wiggington Plateau; Area 110 of the Dacorum Landscape Character Assessment (HCC 2003). The area is described as having relatively high woodland cover including a number of plantations (arable to the south and equestrian grazing to the north), while the edge of the Berkhamsted urban fringe includes schools, playing fields and a cemetery (HCC 2003). Beyond the southern limits of the town the land lies within the County of Buckinghamshire. This area is occupied by open fields and small settlements such as Hawridge, Chartridge and Botley, while the nearest town, Chesham, lies five miles south of Berkhamsted.
- 2.12 To the west of Berkhamsted town centre, out towards and including Cow Roast, is the upper Bulbourne Valley; Area 117 of the Dacorum Landscape Character Assessment (HCC 2003). The Grand Union Canal intercepts with the River Bulbourne along the valley floor and the valley slopes remain predominantly arable and unsettled; there are some urban fringes uses such as sports fields and allotments (HCC 2003).

Geology

- 2.13 The underlying geology of Berkhamsted is chalk covered with well-drained, fine, silty soils to the valley bottom with more shallow, calcareous, fine, silty soils to the slopes as described in the Dacorum Landscape Character Assessments Areas 110, 117, 119

and 121 (HCC 2003). The area is within the Thames Valley drainage system (the River Bulbourne flows into the River Gade, then the River Colne and then into the River Thames).

Archaeology

- 2.14 Although much of the history of Berkhamsted relates to the Post-Conquest period (after 1066), a number of archaeological finds and landscape features date to the Prehistoric, Roman and Saxon periods. A small number of late Iron Age cremations and coins along with Neolithic axes and pottery suggest that the valley and its slopes were in-use during the Prehistoric period (up to c100BC). This, along with Neolithic and Bronze Age flints and Iron Age roundhouses, indicates that the valley of the River Bulbourne had probably been continuously settled from the time of the first farmers onwards (Thompson & Bryant 2005).
- 2.15 *Grims Ditch* is a bank and ditch earthwork that was constructed in the late Bronze Age (c1200 – 800BC) by farming communities in Bulbourne river valley as possibly a territorial boundary running through Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire (Thompson and Bryant 2005). It runs along the south side of the valley from Bradenham to Berkhamsted, spanning 18 kilometres. Three surviving sections of Grims Ditch lay close to Berkhamsted and all are statutory protected (Scheduled Monuments); a 210 metre ditch within the grounds of Woodcock Hill, between Bells Lane and Durrant's Lane (No. 35349), and two sections close to Wiggington (Nos. 35347 & 35348). While all sections of the ditch lie outside the conservation area boundary, any well-preserved remains of the earthwork are afforded statutory protection. Evidence of this feature running along the south side of Berkhamsted itself is thought to have been removed by nineteenth century expansion of the town.
- 2.16 In the late Iron Age and Roman period (c100BC to cAD 400), the Bulbourne Valley developed into a major iron production centre due its strategic location within the Chilterns and to the natural resources: water, timber and iron pan. Iron production led to the settlement of Cow Roast, to the northwest of Berkhamsted, but production appears to have ceased by the end of the Roman period. Roman finds within Berkhamsted are scattered throughout the town, with a concentration along Akeman Street (the High Street). Evidence of roadside occupation (masonry buildings and pottery) has been recorded, including a building and coins in the grounds of Berkhamsted Castle. While it is possible that the medieval earthworks removed part of a larger Roman site, the surviving Roman building has been given statutory protection as a Scheduled Monument (No. HT88). Remains of a Roman villa were discovered close to the river at Northchurch, between Berkhamsted and Cow Roast. Evidence of a Roman settlement at Cow Roast has also been given statutory protection as a Scheduled Monument (No. HT91).
- 2.17 Settlement of Berkhamsted during the Saxon period is said to lie west of the town at Northchurch. This has been suggested from the Saxon building material found in the south and west walls of St. Mary's Church on Akeman Street (High Street) at Northchurch. The Church of St. Mary was part of a large estate and was probably built by local Saxon lords; this became part of the medieval manor of Berkhamsted after the Norman Conquest but was known as the parish of Berkhamsted St. Mary until the fourteenth century. Evidence of late ninth century human interference with the River Bulbourne near Mill Street suggests that watermills were in existence during the late Saxon period (recorded in the later Domesday Survey of 1086).
- 2.18 Subsequent to the Extensive Urban Survey report of 2005 by Thompson & Bryant, further assessment of archaeological evidence suggests that the late Saxon / early Norman town of the eleventh century may have stood east of the original Saxon

settlement at Northchurch, somewhere between Chesham Road and St. John's Well Lane. The new town may have been orientated north-south; roughly running from Chesham Road in the south down to and crossing the High Street, before continuing northwards up to the castle (possibly via Water Lane / Mill Street) rather than the later east-west town plan that exists today. Rare early Saxon pottery has been found close to Chesham Road / High Street junction in Berkhamsted.

- 2.19 The settlement may have moved to this location to be closer to a small church, the Chapel of St. James, which stood near St. John's Well Lane. The Chapel of St. James belonged to a small community of monks, the Brotherhood of St. John the Baptist, who lived during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Once the Norman town had been planned, including the building of St. Peter's Church that began in c1200, the later medieval town of the thirteenth century onwards grew up along an east-west alignment around the church and the old market place on the High Street. Medieval burgage plots that line the High Street (Akeman Street) are part of the thirteenth century town plan that largely survives today.
- 2.20 After the Norman Conquest, Berkhamsted Castle was built as a new manorial centre held by Robert, the Count of Mortain and half-brother of William I, east of Northchurch. The Domesday Survey recorded thirty seven households within the town that grew up along the High Street (Akeman Street) away from the castle gate. Berkhamsted Castle is thought to date from the eleventh century and is a Scheduled Monument (No. 20626). It is said to have been dismantled in 1124 and re-built between 1155 and 1165, when it was owned by Thomas a Beckett. Although it was put in good order in 1361 for King John of France, held as a prisoner of war, the castle ceased to be inhabited after 1495; English historian John Leland noted it was 'much in Ruine' in c1540. From the latter part of the sixteenth century it served as a quarry for building materials. The discovery in 2008 of a possible twelfth to fourteenth century town boundary (artificial bank and ditch) at Victoria Church of England School, Chesham Road suggests that a sizeable defensive structure stood along the boundary of the later Norman settlement in Berkhamsted.
- 2.21 Much of the conservation area is designated as an Area of Archaeological Significance (no. 21). Developers should refer to Policy 118 of the Dacorum Borough Local Plan 1991-2011 and Dacorum Borough Council's Local Planning Framework (Pre-Submission Core Strategy).

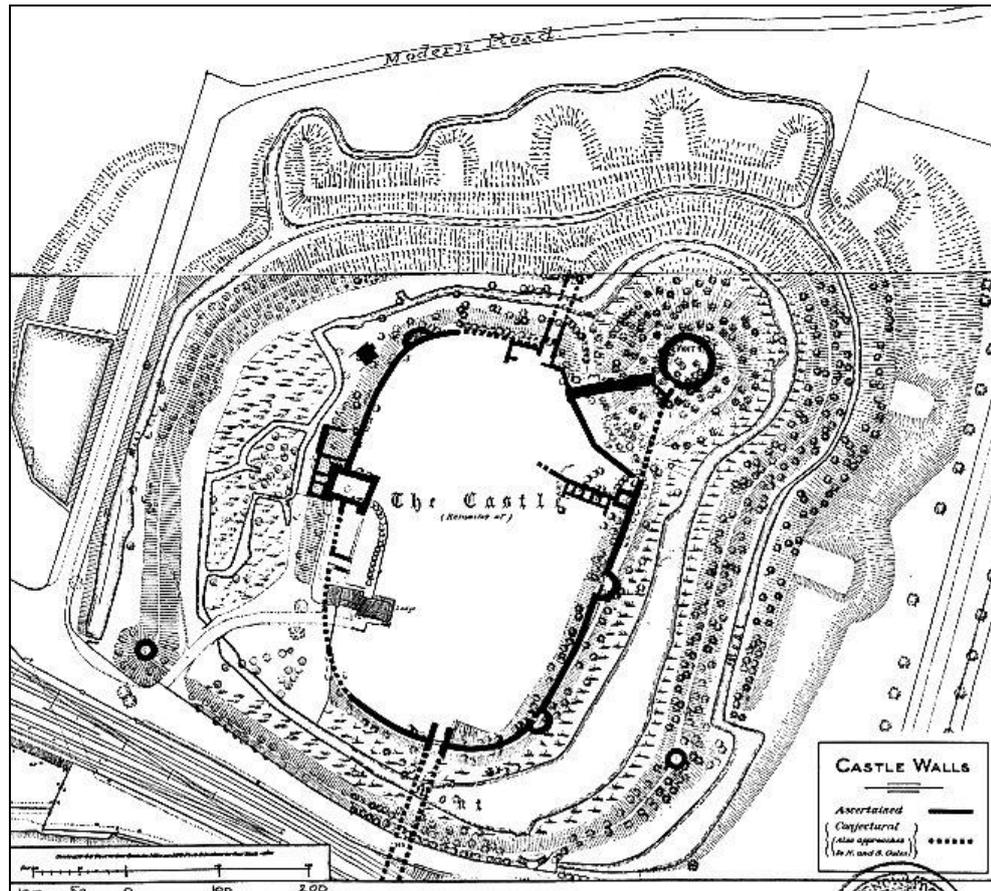
3.0 The Historical Development of the Town

11th – 15th Century

- 3.1 The townscape of present day Berkhamsted is inextricably linked with the importance and development of the medieval castle and of transport links in the form of Akeman Street, a Roman road running between London and Aylesbury that now forms the High Street / London Road. Remains of Roman settlements have been found along the road and also within the grounds of Berkhamsted Castle itself. The layout of the town has also been affected by the building of the Grand Union Canal during the late eighteenth century and the London to Birmingham Railway, which opened in 1838, all of which follow the valley of the River Bulbourne.
- 3.2 Berkhamsted, recorded as *Beorhamstede* or *Berchehamstede* during the eleventh century, was held by Edmer Atule, a thegn of King Edward the Confessor before the Conquest. Not much is known of Saxon Berkhamsted, but it is likely that a settlement would have existed west of the current town towards St. Mary's Church in Northchurch; its south and west walls have been dated to the Saxon period (see 2.17 – 2.19 above). Evidence of watermills thought to have stood near Mill Street since at least the ninth century were recorded in Domesday Survey of 1086.
- 3.3 After the Battle of Hastings in 1066, Norman forces travelled over the Chilterns and camped at Berkhamsted. Shortly before Christmas, Edgar Atheling, Aldred Archbishop of York, and Earls Edwin and Morcar travelled from London to meet William the Conqueror and swore their loyalty to him at Berkhamsted, in return for the promise of just government. William granted Berkhamsted and the surrounding manors to his half brother Robert, Count of Mortain. It was he who commenced work on the motte and bailey of the castle and constructed the first timber buildings.
- 3.4 The castle became an important centre of power, from which the Count's lands were administered including those that lay within the County of Northamptonshire. The Count's son, William, led a rebellion against Henry I, which led to all his estates being confiscated and the timber castle at Berkhamsted being burned to the ground. Some re-building of the castle occurred in the early twelfth century, including the bailey walls, moat and the Keep (tower). The Barbican, or principal gate, with its drawbridge was probably built at this time and lay along the south side of the castle (roughly opposite what is now Castle Street that leads to the railway station).



*Berkhamsted Castle from the time of Edward IV in the fifteenth century
(image taken from HALS Photographic Collection)*

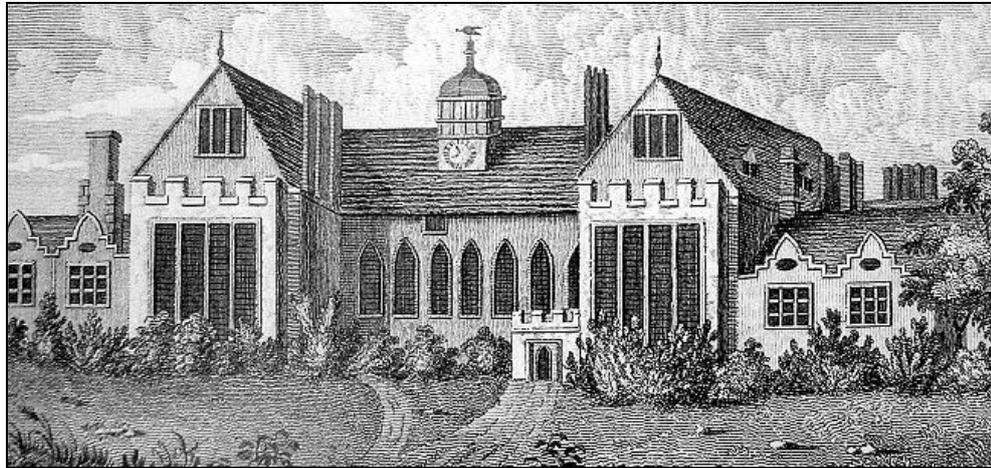


RCHME 1909 survey of Berkhamsted Castle showing earthworks, walls and buildings (NMR, Swindon)

- 3.5 When Thomas a Becket was overlord of the castle between 1155 and 1165, he spent large sums of money on extensive repairs. King Henry II spent considerable time at Berkhamsted Castle, which became his favourite residence, and subsequently awarded the merchants of the town a Royal Charter in 1156 to grant them exemption of taxes, tolls and duties when travelling with their goods in England and Normandy.
- 3.6 During the fourteenth century, King Edward III ordered an extensive survey followed by a major programme of refurbishment of the castle for his son (Edward, the Black Prince). In its final form Berkhamsted Castle consisted of an impressive complex of buildings and fortifications, but by the end of the fifteenth century became uninhabited. From the latter part of the sixteenth century it served as a quarry for building materials, most notably for the building of Berkhamsted Place. Its Barbican (principal gate) along the southern ramparts survived until it was demolished to make way for the construction of the railway embankment during the 1830s. Archaeological excavation of the castle during 1905 revealed fourteenth and fifteenth century glazed tiles, and further excavation in the 1960s also revealed evidence of thirteenth century occupation.
- 3.7 St. Peter's Parish Church stands along the High Street in the middle of the town. Leading down from the east end of the church is Castle Street, formerly Castle Lane. It dates in part to c1200 and is thought to have replaced an earlier small church, the Chapel of St. James, located near St. John's Well Lane. Here during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, a small community of monks, the Brotherhood of St. John the Baptist, lived close to an ancient 'holy spring'. The Hospital of St. John the Baptist was founded by Geoffrey Fitzpiers, the Earl of Essex, in c1213 and was probably located close to the Chapel of St. James near St. John's Well Lane. However the exact location of both sites has never been precisely determined. The hospitals were disbanded in 1516 and their revenues used in the foundation of Berkhamsted School

by John Incent, Dean of St. Paul's, London in 1541; the 'Old Hall' was completed in 1544.

- 3.8 Outside Berkhamsted some distance to the north stood another monastery, Ashridge. Edmund, the Earl of Cornwall who possessed Berkhamsted Castle in the late thirteenth century, ordered a religious house to be built on land at Little Gaddesden in 1275. It too was disbanded in 1539 and became a Royal residence to Henry VIII until it was given over to Thomas Egerton in 1604, Lord Keeper to Elizabeth I and then Lord Chancellor to James I. Berkhamsted Castle had been out of use since the late fifteenth century and so the manorial centre moved to Ashridge. Francis Henry Egerton, the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater, inherited Ashridge in 1747. He had a passion for engineering and canals, building the first true waterway, the Bridgewater Canal, and was later known as 'the Father of Inland Navigation'. Under John Egerton, the 7th Earl of Bridgewater, the grounds at Ashridge were re-modelled for by Humphrey Repton and the house re-built by the architect James Wyatt. The later owners, Lord and Lady Brownlow (Adelbert and Adelaide Egerton) hosted parties to which members of the Royal family and leading politicians came during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.



Engraving of Ashridge, published in 1790, before it was re-built by James Wyatt in 1810 (Hastie 1999)

- 3.9 By the fourteenth century, Berkhamsted (recorded as *Berchamstede*) is reputed to have been one of the best market towns in the country. By the fifteenth century it had become an important medieval Borough and was given a Royal Charter under Edward IV (1442 - 1483), which decreed that no other market town was to be set up within eleven miles. Around 1583 a new market house was erected west of St. Peter's Church at the end of Middle Row (also known as *Le Shopperowe* in 1357 and later as *Graball Row*); it was destroyed in a fire in 1854.
- 3.10 The dominance of the castle over the town's development, along with its power through the feudal system and the building of a new Parish Church of St. Peter's, had a huge impact upon the layout of the town from the thirteenth century onwards; the street pattern is thought to have changed from a north-south alignment during the Saxon period to an east-west alignment. Medieval burgage plots lining the High Street (Akeman Street) are part of this thirteenth century town plan where the core of the town moved to be centred around St. Peter's Church and the old market place. This arrangement largely survives today. One of the oldest surviving buildings is 173 High Street, which lies on the south side of the road to the west of the Parish Church and the market area. It dates in part to the late thirteenth century and was probably a service wing to a former aisled hall; no. 173 is thought to be the oldest, jettied, urban building in the country. In addition, the front range of the former Swan public house, no. 139, is thought to have been an open timber hall dating to the fourteenth century and was later extended to the west and east. The Dean Incent's House, opposite St.

Peter's Church, dates to the late fifteenth century and is also one of the older High Street properties. Next to the church is the sixteenth century Court House. It stands behind the High Street on the north side and was the first civic centre where the town's Borough Court or Council met. Disputes of local trading and the Court Manor were also heard there; the building was later used as a National School.



Buckler sketch of Berkhamsted High Street in c1835 looking east: the old Market House on the corner of Church Lane and St. Peter's Church beyond (Birtchnell 1975)



The same view today of Berkhamsted High Street looking east: the old Market House destroyed by fire in 1854 has been replaced and the tower of St. Peter's Church is now hidden by the taller buildings of 136 - 146 High Street

16th – 18th Century

- 3.11 In the late sixteenth century, the mansion of Berkhamsted Place was built on the hill to the northwest of Berkhamsted for Sir Edward Carey, the Keeper of the Jewels to Elizabeth I who had been granted the Manor of Berkhamsted in 1580. This substantial estate can be seen on the Dury & Andrews map of 1766 (Map 3). Into its building went faced stone and flints from Berkhamsted Castle, which Sir Edward Carey held

for the rent of one red rose from Elizabeth I, payable on the feast of St. John the Baptist. By 1662 the house had become the home of John Sayer, Chief Cook to Charles II. Upon his death in 1681 and under his wishes, Sayer's widow supervised the construction of the almshouse on the High Street in 1684; £1,000 was put in trust for purchasing land for the relief of the poor that led to the building of the almshouse, which consisted of twelve rooms for the use of six poor widows.



Berkhamsted Place c1856 over-looking the town with St. Peter's Church in the distance occupied by John Sayer in the 1660s (TBLH & MS 2005)



Sayer's almshouses on the High Street, built in 1684

- 3.12 Within the town on the High Street stood another Elizabethan Mansion, Egerton House, which had gardens and orchards that extended up the hillside southwards; it may have been used as a Dower House for the Ashridge estate, owned by the Earl of Bridgewater. It was sold-off during the 1930s, demolished and replaced by The Rex Cinema (page 33). During the mid-eighteenth century a new substantial property, Ashlyns Hall, was built out on the southern edge of the town with large grounds. It is clearly identified on the Dury and Andrews map of 1766 (Map 3).
- 3.13 By the mid-late eighteenth century the extent of the town's development can be seen on the Dury and Andrews map (Map 3). The High Street remained a dominant feature with other roads leading away from the town to the north and south; Castle Street (formerly Castle Lane), Water Lane and Ravens Lane leading north, and Cross Oak Road (formerly Gilhams Lane), Kings Road, Chesham Road (formerly Grubbs Lane) and Swing Gate Lane leading south. The church and market place are shown at the centre of *Berkhamsted*, while a small hamlet, Heath End, lay close to the foot of the castle (near Whitehill) and Ashlyns Hall, with its landscaped grounds, is shown on the outskirts of the town. On the north side of the market place is a long narrow island of shops, Middle Row (formerly *Shopperowe*), behind which is a narrow lane (Back Lane, now Church Lane). On the Dury and Andrews map small dots line the street frontages to the west of Middle Row; these are thought to be market stalls.



Castle Street in c1860 looking north towards the river and canal beyond (Birtchnell 1975). The left side of the street is densely packed with buildings and in the distance by the canal is the Castle Inn (dated c1840). On the right side beyond the corner next to the river is the seventeenth century public house, The Boote.



The same view of Castle Street today. The former public houses, The Boote (right) and the Castle Inn (left) can just be seen. Some of the buildings on the left of Castle Street, such as St. George's School (with double gable), still remain while those between St. George's and the Castle Inn have been replaced by modern buildings, such as the newly built, large, multi-gabled Chadwick Centre for Berkhamsted Collegiate School

- 3.14 Although social conditions remained poor during the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the wealthier classes did not seem to suffer. Sometime between mid and late eighteenth century a series of large urban properties were built within the town along the High Street including: Pilkington Manor, Boxwell House, The Red House, The Hall (Berkhamsted Hall) and Highfield House. Pilkington Manor, The Hall and Highfield House, some of which occupied the large plots with private gardens. Other Georgian town houses for more professional classes also began to appear on the High Street, while others were 'modernised' with brick frontages.
- 3.15 By 1766 the High Street had become a turnpike road under the control of The Sparrows Herne Turnpike Trust. The Trust was formed in 1762 to improve the maintenance of the roads and ease transport from Bushey, through Watford, Berkhamsted and Tring and on to the outskirts of Aylesbury. Some historians say a

Toll House once stood at the east end of the High Street, near Bank Mill, to collect payment for using the road.

- 3.16 Stagecoach passenger travel became more common in the eighteenth century and Berkhamsted developed into an important posting town on a main coaching route to London from Aylesbury and the Midlands. There were a number of coach builders in the town along with blacksmiths, saddlers and wheelrights who were able to profit from the regular stream of coaches. Brewing, which had largely been a domestic industry, also became an important feature of Berkhamsted's economy; the Swan Brewery on Chesham Road supplied the Swan Inn, the Brownlow Arms, and the Rose and Crown. Other maltings included those on Chapel Street, and by the end of the nineteenth century the brewing industry was a significant local employer. The largest was Locke and Smith Brewery in Water Lane, which supplied over forty public houses in Berkhamsted and Northchurch until it closed in 1914.

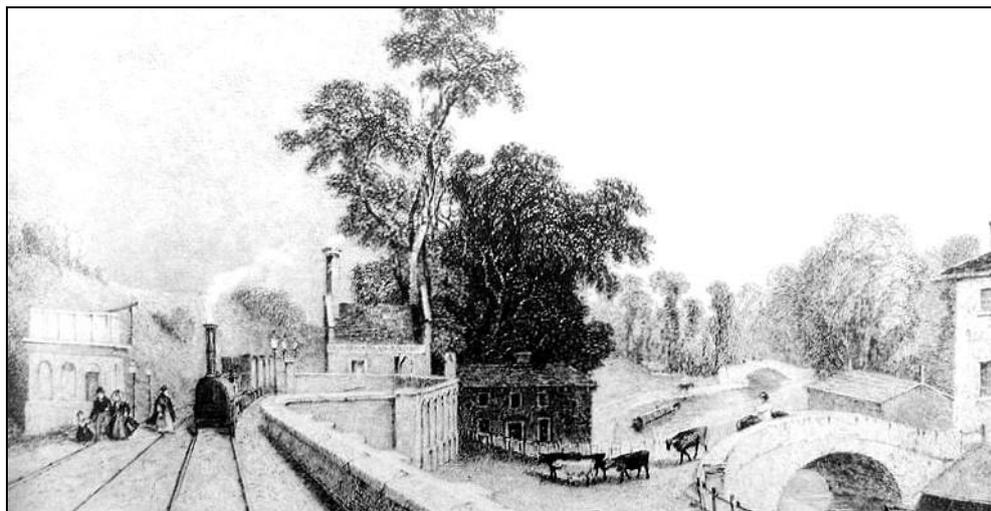


High Street c1860 looking north. The Swan, the Crown and the King's Arms are on the left side; the horse and cart stand outside the Swan (Birtchnell 1975)



The same view of the High Street today. The former Swan (pink gables), and the Crown and the King's Arms are on the left side. Some two-storey buildings on the right side have been replaced by three-storey properties (136 - 146 High Street)

- 3.17 The expansion of coach travel and improvements to road maintenance, as a result of the turnpike system, led to the growth of hostleries, such as the King's Arms on the south side of the High Street, which offered stabling for up to forty horses. A number of other principal coaching inns of the eighteenth century lay close to the market place; on the south side next to the Kings Arms stood the Swan and the Crown, and opposite on the north side, the One Bell. Further along the south side of the High Street was The Five Bells.
- 3.18 The Grand Junction Canal Company was formed in 1793 to link the Thames with canals in the Midlands. By 1798 the Grand Junction Canal was open from Brentford to Berkhamsted, travelling through the Ashridge Estate just below the castle. The waterway became fully operational in 1805. The route favoured Berkhamsted as it, in effect, bypassed Hemel Hempstead and made the transportation of corn and timber much easier. The new form of transport meant that, for the first time, coal could be brought into the area in large quantities. Also dung, night soil and street sweepings were brought out of London for use on local farms and on the return journey, hay and straw were sent back to London, thus relieving the roads of heavy wagon traffic. Busy canal side wharves near Castle Street and Ravens Lane enabled domestic and industrial supplies to be delivered by horse-drawn barges or wide-boats (Castle Wharf stood between the river and the canal that are currently occupied by Alsford Wharf and Bridge Court, and at the end of Ravens Lane stands Ravens Wharf). Canal side taverns also prospered such as The Castle, The Crooked Billet, The Boat and the Crystal Palace. A boat building timber yard was established between the coal wharves at Castle Street and Ravens Lane.



Sketch of the Grand Union Canal and the London and Birmingham Railway, c1840. The bridge to Castle Street and the former Castle Inn stand on the right, while the original railway station is seen on the left (TBLH & MS 2005)

- 3.19 The canal was successful and continued to flourish for many years but, with the advent of the railways in the nineteenth century, was unable to compete. In 1929 the controlling company amalgamated with the Grand Union Canal Company in an attempt to economise, and as a result of this the canal was re-named. Improvements were made to the Grand Union Canal, but decline had set in. In 1948 the waterways were nationalised and twenty years later the Grand Union Canal was classified a 'cruising' canal as opposed to a commercial waterway.
- 3.20 In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the timber industry flourished around Berkhamsted, famous for the supply of clogs, rafters, bowls, shovels, spoons, tent poles and other equipment. Straw plaiting and lace-making were crafts which had been practised for a considerable period as cottage industries, but in the early nineteenth century, straw plaiting became a significant feature of the local economy and lace-making declined. Castle Street is likely to have been one of the areas were

such cottage industries took place. A change in legislation leading to cheap imports and the introduction of basic school education (1870 Education Act) assisted in the decline of straw plaiting. Along the river and canal, conditions favoured the cultivation of watercress beds, evidence of which still exist. The main cress beds ran between Billet Lane and St. John's Well Lane along the north side of the riverbank. Land on the south of the river between Stag Land and St. John's Well Lane was occupied by Lane's Nurseries, who were founded in 1777 and grew apples, pears, plums and cherries (Map 5). Milling also played major roles in shaping Berkhamsted; Upper Mill on Mill Street and Lower Mill on London Road / Bank Mill Lane (now The Old Mill House, a grade II listed building). Two mills were mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and by the seventeenth century were named Upper Mill and Lower Mill (corn water-mills). Upper Mill stood opposite The Moor on the east side of Mill Street with its sluice by the bridge over the river (Map 4). The site was re-developed in the 1920s by Berkhamsted School. Castle Mill on Lower Kings Road was built in 1910 (Map 7).

19th Century

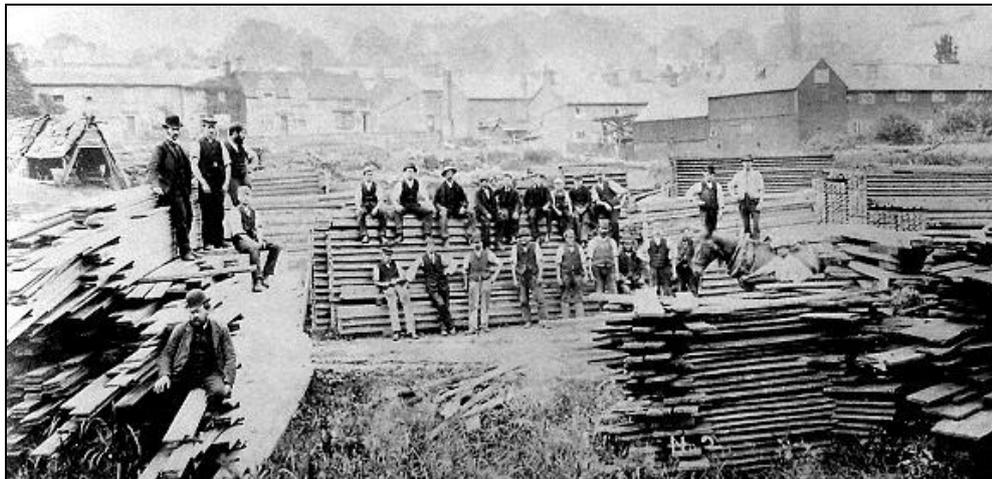
- 3.21 The construction of the Birmingham to London Railway began in 1834; the local contract was given to W. & L. Cubitt who employed 700 labourers at its peak of building works. It can be seen as having been partially mapped on the 1841 Tithe Map, not proceeding past Ravens Lane, through land owned by Lord Brownlow (Adelbert Egerton) of Ashridge (Map 4). The original Elizabethan-style railway station, which had no platforms, was replaced in 1875 by the present station buildings. The London and Birmingham Railway was taken over by The London and North Western Railway (LNWR) in 1846. In 1858 a third line was added and in 1875 a fourth line was constructed along with extensive sidings, making further expansion of the local economy possible. In 1923 the LNWR became part of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway (LMS) before being nationalised in 1948 (British Railways).
- 3.22 By 1801, Berkhamsted was still a small town with most of the 1,690 inhabitants of the parish of St. Peter's living in High Street, Castle Street, Mill Street, Water End and the outlying settlement of Frithsden. The town's population began to grow rapidly during the construction of the railway between 1831 and 1841. By 1851, the population had risen to 3,395. There was much overcrowding and few new houses, other than private mansions that had been built to accommodate the expanding population.
- 3.23 The extent of the town during the mid-nineteenth century can be seen on the 1841 Tithe Map (Map 4); it had changed little in size since the eighteenth century. The focus of settlement remained along the linear High Street with the church and castle being the prominent buildings. Roads to the north side of the High Street included Ravens Lane, Castle Street, Water Lane joining Mill Street and St. John's Well Lane. Lower Kings Road was built in 1885 by public subscription. Roads to the south side included Swing Gate Lane, Chesham Road, Kings Road and Cross Oak Road. A series of smaller roads are also shown running southwards in 1841: Highfield Road, Rectory Lane, Three Close Lane, Cowper Lane, Park View, Boxwell Road and Kitsbury Road. These often only led to single houses or land to the rear of High Street properties; throughout the twentieth century these small roads have been joined by new streets and are densely built-up areas except for Rectory Lane.
- 3.24 The larger estates that lay outside Berkhamsted remain (Ashridge, Berkhamsted Place and Ashlyns Hall). Others dating to the eighteenth century that stood within the town also survived; Pilkington Manor, Boxwell House, The Red House, The Hall (Berkhamsted Hall) and Highfield House. Several farming estates also lay on the outskirts of the town; Durrants, Kitsbury and Cross Oak (to the south and southwest). However, the town's growth in housing numbers was mainly limited to small cottages for industrial workers until the 1840s onwards when some large houses began to sell-off portions of land or break-up entire estates for new housing development; Ashlyns, Pilkington Manor, Boxwell House, The Hall, Highfield House, Durrants, Kitsbury and

Cross Oak. Whilst in some cases this may have occurred 'naturally' (no single heirs / high death taxes), the overall impression is that it resulted from local demand for homes for industrial workers, rather than 'natural loss' or economic decline.

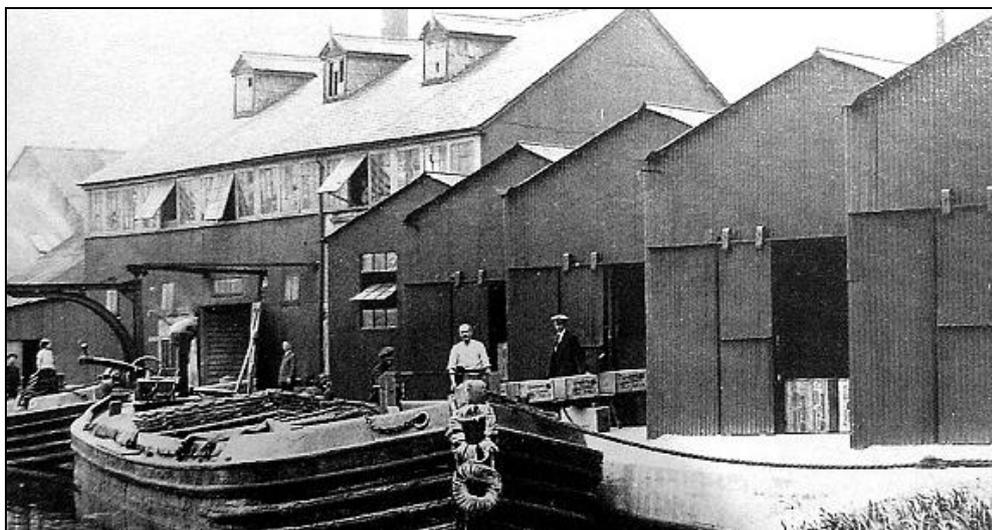
Map 4: 1841 Tithe Map of Berkhamsted (courtesy of HALS)



- 3.25 The first large-scale development commenced in 1851; this is seen on the 1877 Ordnance Survey map (Map 5). The Pilkington Manor Estate, east of Castle Street, was sold and the area developed up to the river's edge with streets of terraced cottages running mostly north-south (Bridge Street, Manor Street and Holliday Street) except for Chapel Street; it joined these new roads with older streets, Castle Street and Ravens Lane. The terraced housing constructed from St. Peter's Church to the east end of the town during the mid-late nineteenth century reflected the industrial class that they were built for; land owned by Highfield House was also used to build further terraced housing on Highfield Road and Victoria Road. Pilkingtons Manor House and rear grounds were however retained into the twentieth century.
- 3.26 This eastern district began to develop as the industrial area of the town with saw mills and chemical works. Sill's Timber Yard stood east of Holliday Street (now part of the Robertson Road modern housing development). Cooper's world famous sheep dip was produced at Cooper's Yard between Manor Street and Ravens Lane on land purchased from Pilkingtons in 1852. It expanded and a new factory was built, Lower Works, in 1880 to the east of Sill's Timber Yard and backed onto the canal for loading / unloading (Lower Works is also part of the Robertson Road development). In 1925 Cooper's merged with another company, McDougall and Robertson Ltd, to become Cooper, McDougall and Robertson (road names in the Robertson Road housing development).



Sill's Timber Yard and saw mill on the High Street c1900, opposite Highfield Road (Hastie 1999)



Cooper's Factory, Lower Work, loading on the canal in 1922 (Hastie 1999)

- 3.27 Despite the increase in population, no residential development had taken place on the north side of the town on land belonging to the Ashridge Estate. Following the construction of the canal and railway, the land between remained open until the 1870s when streets with rows of terraced housing first began to appear (Station Road, Ellesmere Road and George Street).
- 3.28 Development southwest of the town began after the farming estate of Kitsbury was sold in 1868. First were the lower parts of Kitsbury Road, Gilhams Lane (now Cross Oak Road) and the fields to the east. Consequently, the earliest buildings in this part of the conservation area are to be found on these sections of street, on Middle Road which is between them and on the section of Charles Street which joins them (Map 5).
- 3.29 The development along Mill Street is more clearly shown on the 1841 Tithe Map (Map 4). In the mid-nineteenth century Upper Mill still stood on the east side of the road and there were a number of other houses to the north and south of the mill. These remained into the late nineteenth century. On the west side of the road in The Moor by the millpond stood further industrial buildings, but these had been demolished by the 1870s. The development of Berkhamsted Collegiate School between St. Peter's Church and the south side of the river beyond Upper Mill began in 1894 with a large new school chapel, and later the New Hall (Deans Hall), which stood close to the sixteenth century Grammar School building (Old Hall). Once the mill had been purchased in 1926, the school owned land up to the road boundary and began demolishing some of the older buildings and adding new ones, such as The School Gym and neighbouring property with a Dutch-style dormer.

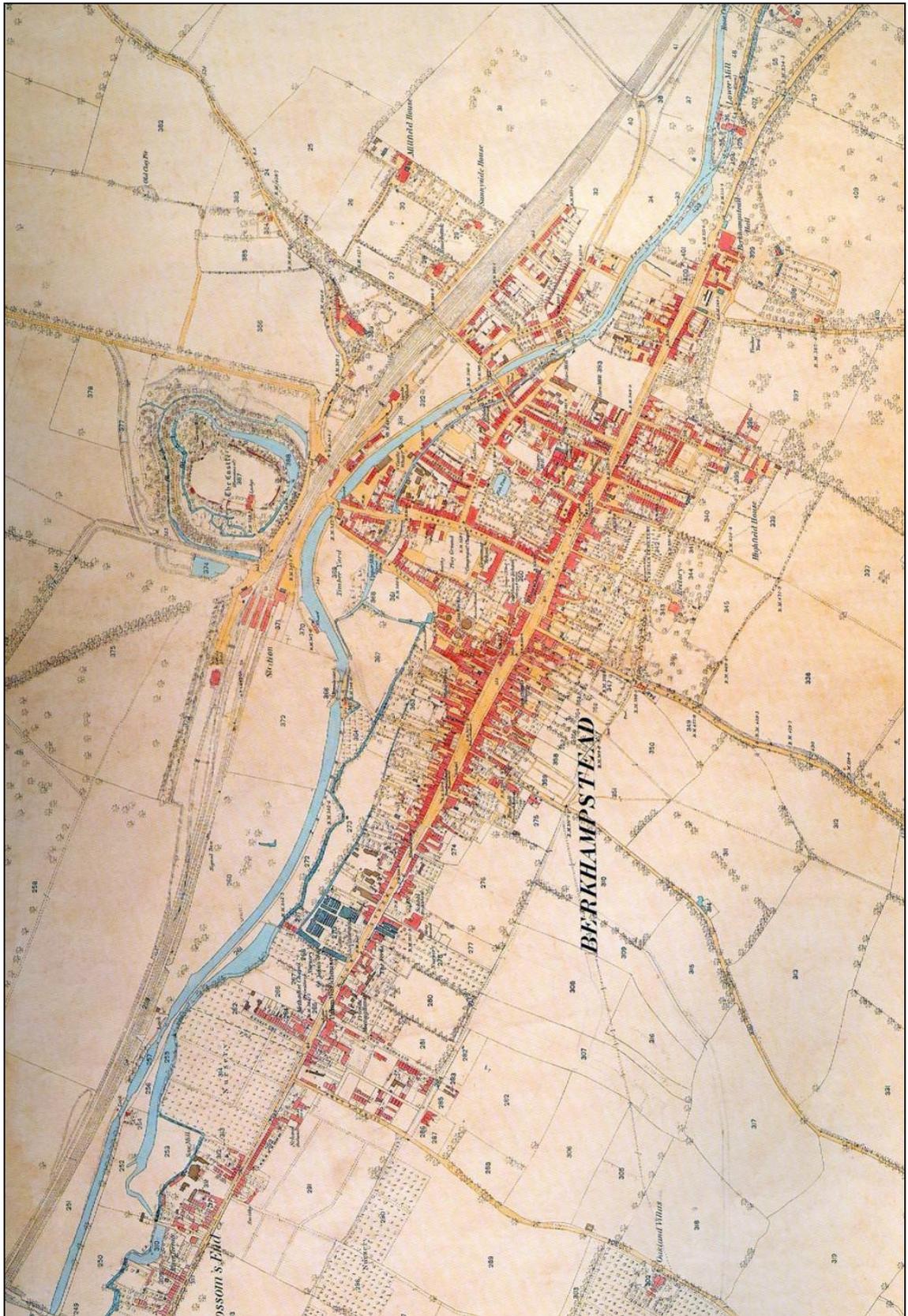


Upper Mill and houses on Mill Street c1909 looking east from across the millpond. It was purchased by the Berkhamsted Collegiate School in 1926 and demolished (HALS Photographic Collection)



Berkhamsted Collegiate School from inside the quad c1904 showing the new chapel and Old Hall (HALS Photographic Collection)

Map 5: Ordnance Survey Map, first edition 1877 (Hastie 1999)



3.30 Over the next sixty years, house building, gradually extended across most of the land between Charles Street and the High Street with the development of the Boxwell estate in 1879 and the sale of Steele's Meadow in 1887. New residential streets were created comprising Cowper Road, Torrington Road, Montague Road and part of Charles Street. Development subsequently spread further up the valley side after the first part of the Kingshill estate (stretching from Kings Road to Cross Oak Road) was sold in 1888 and the sale of further land in 1897 that became Doctor's Commons Road.



Charles Street from Cross Oak Road in 1897 (Hastie1999)



Berkhamsted Town Hall 1900 (BEAMS Photographic Collection)



Berkhamsted High School for Girls c1903 (HALS Photographic Collection)

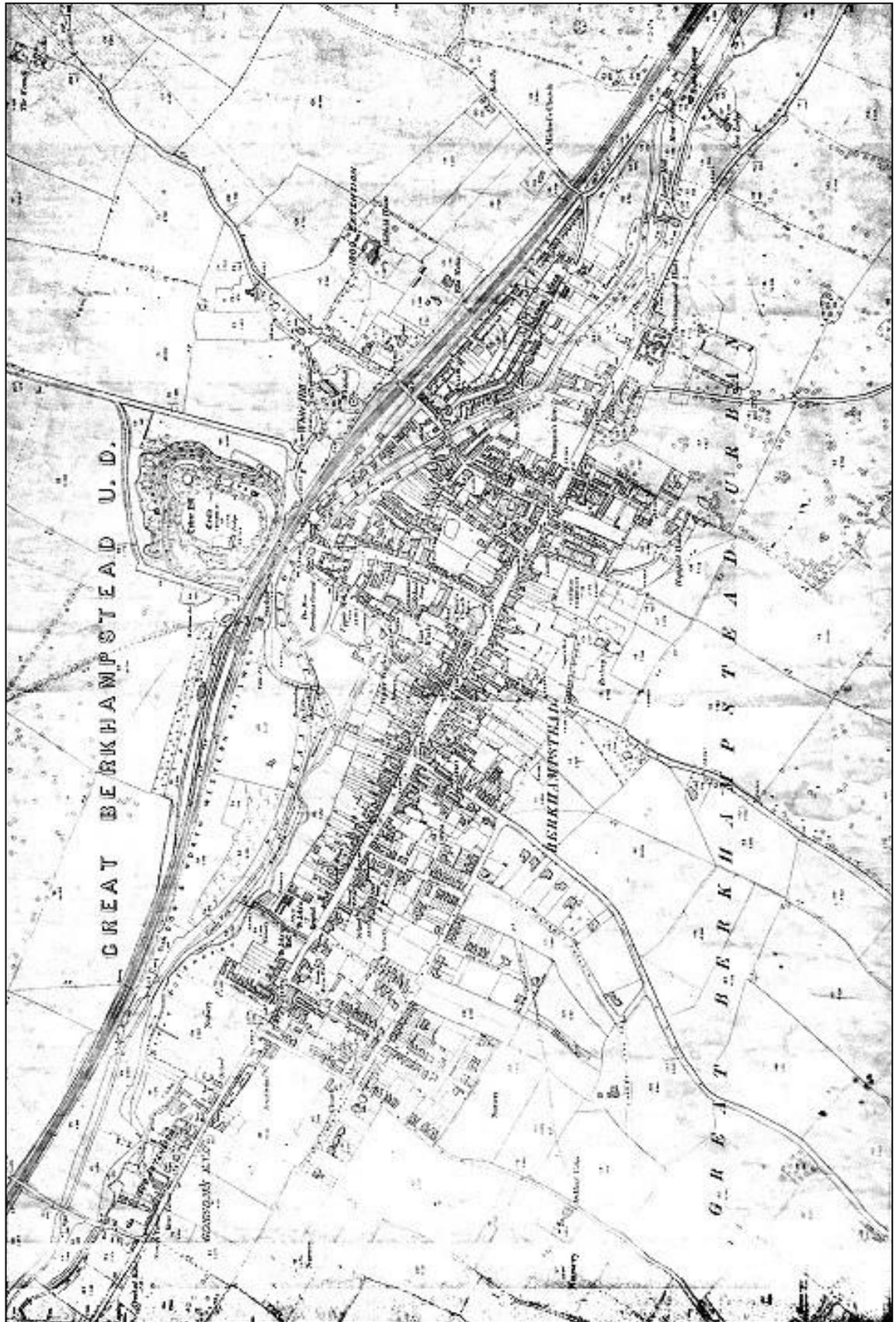


The first Congregational Chapel c1860 (Birchnell 1975)



Berkhamsted Old School House c1960 (TBLH & MS 2005)

Map 6: Ordnance Survey Map, second edition 1898 (courtesy of HALS)

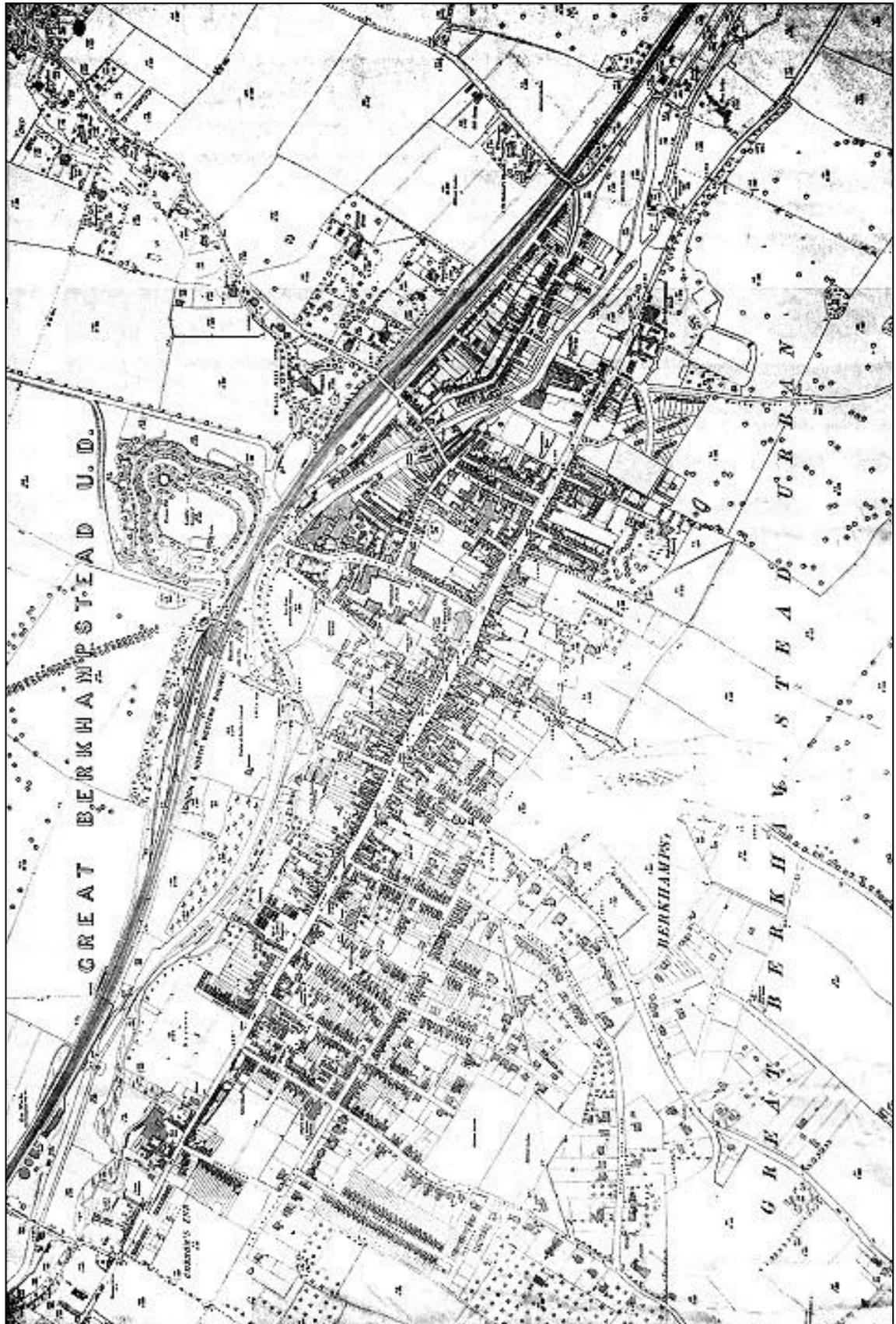


- 3.31 By the late 1890s the population in the Parish of St. Peter's was triple that of the 1801 figure and continued to grow past the turn of the century into the Edwardian period. As the Berkhamsted Collegiate School grew, and as more and more merchants moved out of London to enjoy country air, development climbed further up the hillside on the south side of town and the proportion of roomy houses with large gardens increased. At the turn of the century a James North, a local auctioneer and valuer, purchased a large amount of North Road and developed it with the terraces we see today to the northern end of the road. In 1902 Shrublands Avenue was started. There was also development within the wedge of land between the Grand Union Canal and the railway; George Street, Ellesmere Road and Station Road (Map 6).
- 3.32 The increasing population led to the building, founding or enlargement of many different types of institutions such as new schools, a number of non-conformist churches and chapels, an administrative centre and the installation of public utilities. By the end of the nineteenth century there were five schools in the town: Berkhamsted School (1541; alterations in 1841 and 1888), Berkhamsted High School for Girls (1888), the Board School (the former British School built in 1834, enlarged in 1871, demolished in 1984), the Infants School (1894), and Bourne's School (1727, incorporated with Berkhamsted and Northchurch National School in 1879). There was a new Town Hall (1859), the Baptist Church (1864), the Quaker Meeting House (1818), the Congregational Chapel (1834; replaced in 1867 and 1974, replaced by William Fiske House), the Primitive Methodist Chapel (1867), the Wesleyan Methodist Chapel (1854), Hope Hall for the Plymouth Brethren (1874, re-built in 1969) and the Union Workhouse (1834), all of which signal the changing needs of a town expanding. Public services followed; Berkhamsted Gas Works (1849), Great Berkhamsted Waterworks Company (1864), the North British Electric Company and the National Telephone Company (both in 1898).
- 3.33 The Old Rectory at the end of Rectory Lane is thought to date to c1840. It occupies land that may have once belonged to Egerton House (part of the Ashridge Estate). The adjoining cemetery Between Three Close Lane and Rectory Lane was probably created during the 1860s, also on land belonging to Egerton House. The cemetery was extended further up the hill in the late nineteenth century. Two small burial grounds within the town relate to local Non-conformist demands of the nineteenth century: the Quaker Meeting House, High Street and the former Congregational Chapel, Chapel Street (land to the rear of William Fiske House). In addition, there were two small cemeteries marked as burial grounds on the 1878 map. One lay on the east side of The Wilderness between the Gas Works and the Old Hall at Berkhamsted Collegiate School (Map 5); it now lies under grass within the school grounds. Another small cemetery lay at the northwest corner of Water Lane where it meets Mill Street next to the river; it now lies under Berkley Court

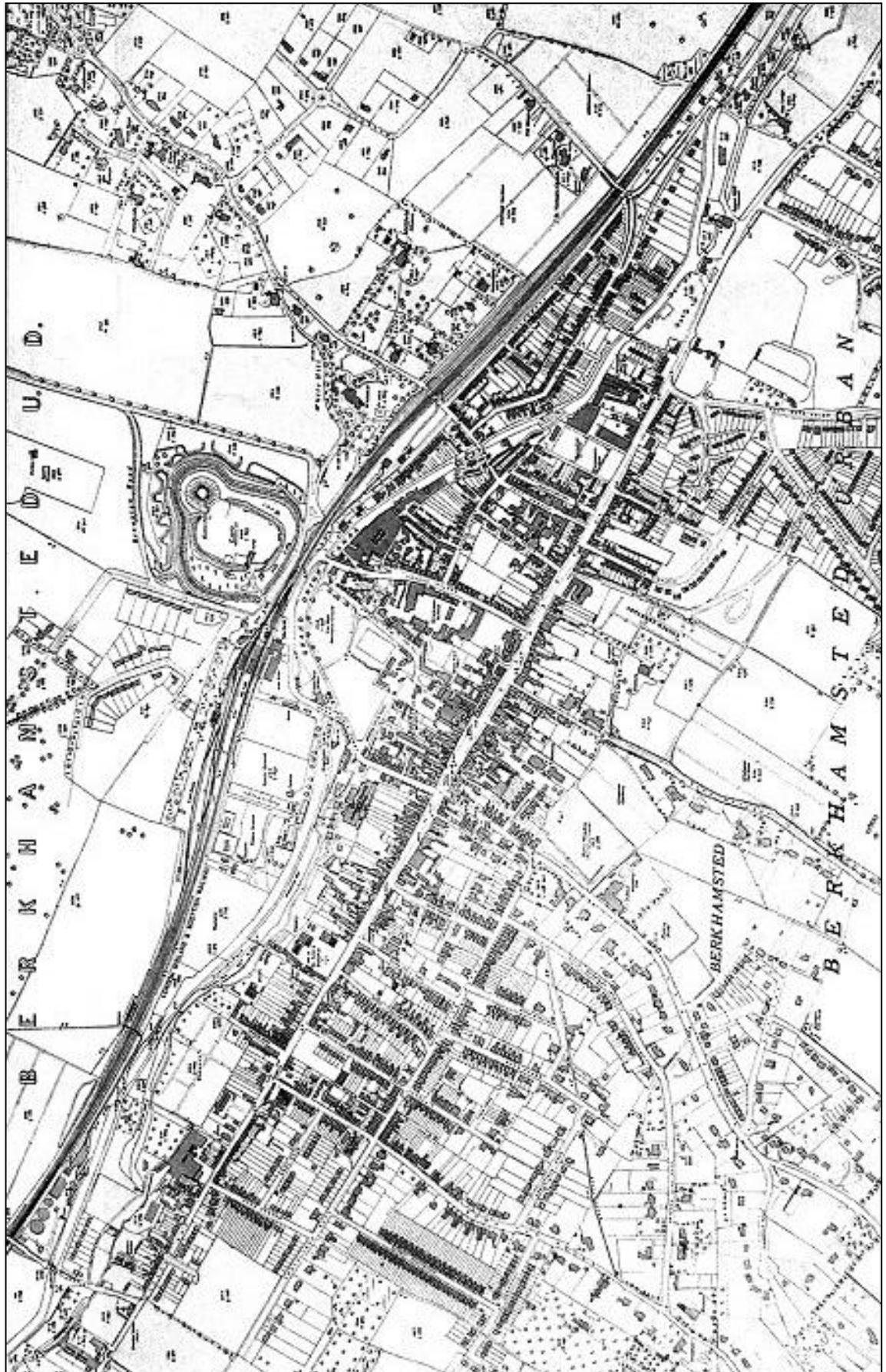
20th – 21st Century

- 3.34 In 1909, the area of Sunnyside (between Gravel Path and Ivy House Lane) was included within the Urban District Council of Berkhamsted (Map 7). Despite this, the number of houses in the Urban District remained almost static for the first twenty years of this century. After the sparse amount of house building following the First World War, some more houses were built in Shrublands Road during the inter-war period as well as individual house such as The Pines off North Road. Anglefield Road was also created during this time.
- 3.35 Most inter-war development within the town occurred through the use of open fields (at the east end) and the demolition of existing properties. As the town expanded, new facilities were built, such as The Rex Cinema on the High Street along with its adjoining flats and shops on the ground floor. It was built in 1938 on land occupied by Egerton House, a former sixteenth century building owned by Edward Greene of The Hall (Berkhamsted Hall) that was demolished.

Map 7: Ordnance Survey Map, third edition 1925 (courtesy of HALS)



Map 8: Ordnance Survey Map, fourth edition 1938 (courtesy of HALS)





Postcard showing Egerton House on the High Street; it was demolished and replaced by The Rex Cinema and adjoining flats in 1938. Pilkingtons stands on the right in front of St. Peter's Church (HALS Photographic Collection)



The same view today. The Rex Cinema and adjoining four-storey flats (both recently restored) on the right, and beyond a row of late Georgian, three-storey town houses (103 – 109 High Street)

- 3.36 After the First World War much of the land at The Hall was sold-off for council housing. During the 1930s Londrina Terrace, its canal footbridge and The Hall Walk were constructed at the east end of the High Street on land belonging to The Hall (a plaque on The Hall Walk reads '1934 E.G.' – a reference to Edward Greene). Edward's older brother, Charles Greene, had been housemaster at the boarding house (St. John's) of Berkhamsted School on Chesham Road) and in 1910 was made Headmaster. His third son, Graham, was born at St. John's in 1904. Graham Greene was a leading author, playwright and literary critic of the twentieth century who wrote novels and screenplays, many of which were turned into films or adapted for television, such as 'Brighton Rock', 'The Third Man', and 'The Quiet American'. He

died aged 86 in 1991. The Greene family is synonymous with Berkhamsted; roads and buildings have been named after them (Greene Walk, Greene Court). The Graham Greene Birthplace Trust is also based in the town. It is a registered charity that was set up in 1997 by local residents with the support of the Town Council; it hosts the annual Graham Greene Festival and 'The Graham Greene Trail' that is part of the Berkhamsted Heritage Walk.

- 3.37 In 1935 Northchurch was also included in the Urban District, but another significant increase in population did not occur until the construction of small Council estates during the 1920s and 1930s (Map 7): land to the west of Swing Gate Lane (with Woodlands Avenue), Gossoms End and Highfield (following the demolition of Highfield House). Other inter-war housing was built southeast of the town (Cedar Road / Hall Park: Map 8). After the sale of the Ashridge estate in the 1930s, building also started on the north side of the railway (Castle Hill and Castle Hill Avenue); its development continued into the 1960s and 1970s (Map 8). During the 1950s a further 200 homes were built by the Council on the Durrants estate at Gossoms End.



Inter-war development on the High Street on the corner with Lower Kings Road, taken c1955. Former buildings were demolished and the new row of shops constructed with offices above (TBLH & MS 2005)



The same view today. Little has changed at these crossroads except for the introduction of traffic lights. The Police Station built in 1972 stands on the right corner (out of view)

3.38 Since the 1950s the population of Berkhamsted has grown steadily, but in more recent years it has slowed down: 10,785 (1951), 15,439 (1971), 15,701 (1991) and 16,243 (2001). Although the expansion of the town has been limited since the designation of Green Belt around it, infilling and the redevelopment of sites within the town centre and residential areas have continued to take place. In addition, retail development along the High Street has occurred along with the demolition and replacement of the Police Station (187 High Street on the corner of Kings Road) in 1972. A number of office buildings have also been built on former rear plots of High Street buildings.



Post-war development in the centre of the High Street, close to St. Peter's Church, taken in 1973. Pilkingtons, a large eighteenth century house, was demolished and replaced by a series of flats with shops to their ground floors. Note the adjacent listed building, no. 108 (BEAMS Photographic Collection)



The same view today. The post-war development next to St. Peter's Church between 108 and 120 High Street (formerly the site of Pilkingtons) has been recently replaced by residential flats, Pilkington Manor

- 3.39 At the core of the commercial High Street, by the old Market Place just beyond Church Lane, large new buildings were built between the 1950s and 1970s to replace earlier smaller structures. It would appear that after Berkhamsted Conservation Area was designated the four-storey glass office building (Chiltern House) was permitted in 1978, replacing an older three-storey commercial property. This is a highly visible building, whose fabric and design character is of its time and although it was commended for its architecture when built, it has a significant and detrimental impact upon the older character of the conservation area.



Twentieth century commercial development in the centre of Berkhamsted on the High Street between the Town Hall and Church Lane, taken in 1973. This followed demolition of earlier buildings on the High Street during the 1950s and 1960s (BEAMS Photographic Collection)



The same view today showing that the 1950s buildings remain in use with very little alteration. Between 1973 and 1979 the pavement was widened and trees were planted. The four-storey glass office building, Chiltern House (built in 1978), replaced the three-storey hipped roof property seen on the above photograph

- 3.40 Development within the town centre of Berkhamsted has continued into the twenty-first century, comprising mostly residential units (flats and houses) that have been built upon sites previously occupied by nineteenth century and twentieth century buildings. Pilkington Manor and the adjacent Dean Fry Court flats are one of the

modern developments; it attempts to emulate the former eighteenth century manor house, but lacks a front walled boundary with railings which was an earlier feature of some eighteenth century houses on the High Street (see postcard on page 31 depicting Pilkington Manor).



Highly visible twentieth century architecture in the centre of Berkhamsted on the High Street taken in 1979 (BEAMS Photographic Collection)



The same view today. Little has changed since 1973 except for a greater amount of street furniture and a bus stop with a pull-in.

- 3.41 With the re-emergence of road traffic as the primary method of transportation during the last century, there has been a decline in the use of the railways for the transportation of goods, materials and people. This resulted in a large number of cars and heavy lorries using the High Street, so a new road (the A41) was constructed in 1993 to bypass the centre of the town. While it alleviates some of the congestion and pollution, it has cut Berkhamsted off from the main route that was responsible for its existence.