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# **BERKHAMSTED**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 The Aim of the Report**

The first edition of this report was produced in 1998 as one of a series of 25 rapid town surveys of historic urban areas within Hertfordshire, as part of the English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey Programme. The project was carried out by Hertfordshire County Council's Archaeology Section in conjunction with English Heritage, who funded the project. All the places surveyed were either urban districts by 1900, or had urban characteristics in the past.

This new edition takes into account new archaeological data, and also includes more detail, particularly on Listed Buildings. The Archaeology Section has become the Historic Environment Unit, within the HCC Environment Department.

The aim of the project is to provide a framework from which decisions can be made about the management of the historic environment resources of Berkhamsted. This assessment report is intended to be a summary of what is known of the archaeological and historical development of the town using the evidence from archaeology, buildings, maps and documents, and surviving physical elements of the historic townscape such as ancient property boundaries. The evidence is presented as a series of thematic and period maps generated by GIS, with an explanatory text.

### **1.2 The Sources Used**

The evidence for the report has been compiled from the following primary sources:

- The Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER)
- The Statutory List of Buildings of Historical and Architectural Interest
- Maps and documents held in the Hertfordshire County Record Office
- Archaeological excavation and survey reports held in the Hertfordshire HER

In addition, numerous books and articles, both published and unpublished, have been used. A bibliography is included at the end of the report.

### **1.3 Geography**

Berkhamsted lies within the district of Dacorum in the west of Hertfordshire. The town is linear in shape, following the Bulbourne river valley, a major north-west to south-east route through the Chilterns. Through the town, in parallel with the river and the High Street, run both the Grand Union Canal and the West Coast main railway line. North-west of the town itself the High Street becomes that of Northchurch, a village subsumed by post-medieval Berkhamsted. The linear topography has had a powerful influence on the

history of settlement in the valley. The main road skirts the edge of the hill; south of the High Street the side streets run straight up the steep hillside, while on the north side the ground slopes away more gently to the river.

## **2.0 AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SETTLEMENT**

### **2.1 Prehistory: Neolithic to Iron Age (to c100 BC) (Fig. 1)**

Prehistoric finds are comparatively scarce in the area of Berkhamsted, but a number of finds of Neolithic date suggest fairly widespread use of the valley and its slopes. It is likely that this part of the valley has been continuously settled from the time of the first farmers in the region onwards. A flint axe now in the Ashmolean Museum (HER 0229) and a scraper in Luton Museum (HER 0230) were found on Berkhamsted Common; the axe is possibly that found by Sir John Evans on the west side of Berkhamsted Hill, off what is now Byways (HER 4252). Another Neolithic flint axe in the British Museum was found at Meadway (HER 6368). On the other side of the valley, a pit containing sherds of Neolithic pottery was found at the top of Chesham Road during works on the A41 bypass (Last 2001; HER 11478).

Neolithic to Bronze Age flints, and roundhouses of late Bronze Age to Iron Age date were found further along the line of the A41 bypass at Oakwood (Last 2001; HER 11479). The roundhouses, on the plateau, may be of similar date to Grim's Ditch 800m down the valley side (below). The only other prehistoric finds recorded in the Historic Environment Record are an Iron Age brooch of c500-400 BC, in Verulamium Museum (HER 0178), from 'Berkhamsted'; and a bronze brooch and silver pin found in Berkhamsted Castle (HER 4251; Branigan 1974-6, 174-5; VCH Herts ii (1908), 114). These two are of Italian origin and have been altered into Roman forms. They are thought to be Roman-period imports and do not belong to Berkhamsted's prehistory.

#### *Grim's Ditch*

The bank and ditch known as Grim's Ditch runs along the south side of the Bulbourne valley, following the contour just below the valley crest, from the valley head to an apparent end at Egerton-Rothesay School at the south-west edge of the town. The monument varies in size between two and four metres from the top of the bank to the bottom of the ditch, and is about 5m wide. In several places along its length the bank has been destroyed by ploughing and nothing remains to be seen above ground.

Grim's Ditch was almost certainly constructed during the late Bronze Age (c1200-800 BC) by farming communities living in the area. Its purpose is uncertain, but it presumably served either as a boundary between tribal territories, or possibly as a boundary between different areas of land use such as woodland and pasture (Bryant & Burleigh 1995). It almost certainly continued further east than its apparent terminus; the evidence of this has probably been largely removed during expansion of the town since

the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The visible portions that survive in the landscape are protected as Scheduled Monuments. The earthwork on the other side of the valley is rather different, and is discussed below.

## **2.2 The late Iron Age and Roman period (c100 BC to cAD 400) (Fig. 2)**

In the late Iron Age, the Bulbourne valley appears to have developed into a major iron production centre, of regional or national importance (Morris & Wainwright 1995). The natural resources of the valley (water, timber, iron pan), together with its strategic value as a route through the Chilterns, made it a prime location for exploitation of the increased demand for iron. This was a time of apparent population expansion, as well as rapid social change brought on largely by the influence of contact with the rapidly expanding Roman empire. It is possible that the ironworking was under the control of a single powerful tribal chief. Four first century shaft furnaces were found on the site of Bridgewater School, Dellfield, close to four late Iron Age cremation burials and ditches and pits of similar date (Thompson & Holland 1974-6).

The earthwork called Grim's Ditch on Berkhamsted Common (HER 0049) is in more than one length, and is much larger in form than the linear earthwork on the south side of the valley (above). It suggests a cross-ridge dyke of late Iron Age or early Roman date, controlling an extensive landscape. At least part of this landscape survives as earthworks on the Ashridge estate and Berkhamsted Common. On the opposite side of the river, a settlement of Iron Age roundhouses and many pits within a rectilinear enclosure was found at Pea Lane on the line of the A41 bypass (Last 2001; HER 11480). The finds in the valley have to be seen in this wider context.

Late Iron Age casual finds include coins, from Ashlyns, found before 1843 (HER 4856); Meadway (HER 6070); Lower Kings Road (HER 6075); and a coin of Augustus from Swing Gate Lane found in the 1940s (HER 6080). Others are known but their findspots have not been recorded.

The valley continued to be a centre for iron production during the earlier Roman period (c50-200 AD). Thereafter the evidence for iron working declines, and it had probably ceased altogether by the end of the Roman period. Much of what is known about the industry comes from settlement further up the valley at Cow Roast. Roman finds in Berkhamsted are scattered and not often well recorded, but concentrate along Akeman Street. Known by this name since medieval times, the road through the valley may have existed before the Roman conquest. Alternatively, it might have run along the higher ground (inf. J Hunn). Soon after the conquest the valley road was engineered as part of a major route from London to Chester. The Bulbourne valley was the most important route through the northern Chilterns during the Roman period and very possibly earlier.

Some evidence has been found of roadside occupation in Berkhamsted. Roman pottery, building materials and iron were found on the street frontage at 142 High Street, Northchurch, in 2002 (inf. Alex Thompson; HER 11776). At 320A High Street, next to St

John's Well Lane, a possible construction layer of the highway has been recorded, together with residual Roman pottery in a medieval or later pit (Walker 1993; HER 7369). Further from the street frontage, one Roman sherd was found at the site of Waitrose (Guttmann 1996a, b; HER 7366) and disturbed Roman pottery at Incents Lawn in Chesham Road (Hunn 2000; HER 10725).

A lamp was found at the new Gas Works at Billet Lane, on the north side of the river, before 1914 (VCH 4 (1914), 150), and 'in 1933 five samian bowls were found bricked up in the corner of a retort house wall' (Thompson & Holland 1982, 40; HER 1335). Just to the south, pottery, animal bone and tile were recorded during construction of a shed at East's timberyard in 1976 (HER 6421; *ibid.*, 39-40). A coin of Hadrian came from the Dellfield allotments in 1975 (HER 6076; *ibid.*, 40). In Bridgewater Road greyware wasters from a pottery kiln were found in 1956 (HER 6803; Swan 1984), and close by, 'when land was being cleared for the construction of the Castle Hill estate during the 1930s, many oyster shells, light pottery and other Roman remains were found' (HER 12193; Hastie 1999, 10). All these finds suggest extensive but possibly scattered occupation north of the river. Unfortunately the full extent and nature of this occupation is hard to gauge from casual finds. Many more coins have been found in the area but never recorded; the minutes of the Society of Antiquaries for 1813 noted 'quantities of Roman coins found here at various times' (VCH Herts 4 (1914), 150). Above the valley to the south, Roman occupation (which may have antecedents in the late Iron Age) has been found on the line of the A41 bypass at Stony Lane, Bourne End (Last 2001; HER 11477).

By the later Roman period much of the valley appears to have been divided into large farming estates, with a complex of agricultural and domestic buildings at the centre of each (Branigan 1985). Each of these complexes included one or more masonry buildings of villa form, with tiled roofs and underfloor heating. Several of them succeeded earlier buildings. Three masonry buildings are known in the vicinity of Berkhamsted:

*Building north of Berkhamsted Castle:* two flint and tile walls of a substantial building were seen in a gas pipe line north of the Castle in 1970, and a fourth century bronze coin found on the site in 1976 (HER 2716). The nature and extent of the building are unknown. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century Stukeley reported that Roman coins had been found at the castle, 'especially from the court within it' (HER 1336; Stukeley 1724, 104), and the Italian Bronze Age brooch and pin, found in the castle (above), may be Roman imports. It is quite possible that the massive medieval earthworks removed at least part of a Roman site.

*Berkhamsted Golf Course building:* 1.25 miles NNW of the Castle building is another (HER 1337) at the edge of the golf course. Small-scale excavations in 1954 revealed masonry foundations and tesserae from floors, but apart from associated earthworks little is known about the structure.

*Northchurch villa:* the remains of a substantial villa were found close to the river in 1973, during housing development (Neal 1974-6). The earliest building, of timber, was put up

in the mid 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. It was rebuilt in stone in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century, and enlarged to a ten-room building c150. The house may have been empty for a period, then reoccupied; in the 4<sup>th</sup> century a small bath suite was added. Even closer to the river was a circular stone structure 30m to the north-east, which was found in 1985 (HER 0182). This was possibly a water-filled shrine, as over 80 coins dating to AD 260-380 were found on the floor. The house was abandoned in the late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> century.

### **2.3 Saxon Berkhamsted (Figs. 3, 4)**

Until recently the only known remains of the period before the Norman conquest consisted of the south and west walls of St Mary's church. The ecclesiastical name for the parish was Berkhamsted St Mary; 'Northchurch' is a popular name, recorded since the 14<sup>th</sup> century. It appears that this Saxon church was built by the lords of a large estate which became the medieval manor of Berkhamsted. This estate, one of the largest in Hertfordshire, was coterminous with St Mary's parish before a large portion of it was made a new parish for the borough of Berkhamsted after the Norman conquest (see below).

#### ***St Mary's church***

The Saxon church will have been a small two-cell structure, typical of pre-conquest churches. The south and part of the west walls survive, and 'the thickness of the wall at the west end proves the existence of a separate square west chamber west of the nave proper' (Pevsner 1977, 261). It is assumed that this would have housed the priest (Birtchnell 1972, 35). Both these early parts and the later, apart from the tower, are built of flint. In the early 13<sup>th</sup> century (at the time of the building of St Peter's) a new chancel and transepts were built, giving the church a cruciform plan. A central tower may have been a feature of this new plan. The transepts were rebuilt in the 15<sup>th</sup> century and a new Totternhoe stone tower built over the crossing on strengthened arches. The cruciform shape disappeared when the north aisle was built in 1881, together with vestries on the north side of the chancel. The south porch was built at the same time.

In Hertfordshire, early churches such as St Mary's are invariably associated with the sites of high-status houses, manorial centres in the medieval period. No evidence has yet been found for such a house at Northchurch; it would probably, but not necessarily, have stood near the church itself.

Akeman Street evidently continued in use, as it has done to the present day. In 1999 an assemblage of pottery was found at Incents Lawn (close to where Chesham Road meets Berkhamsted High Street) which included several early to mid Saxon sherds and many more apparently Saxo-Norman sherds (Hunn 2000; HER 10725). Early Saxon pottery is rare in the county, and this find is of some significance although its context here is unknown. The Saxo-Norman pottery is of more immediate interest, as it relates to the period of the town's foundation. More pottery of the same period, AD 1000-1150, was found on the site of the Cooper sheep-dip works only 20m from Akeman Street, in 1999 (Parsons 1999; HER 10944). With it was 'a large quantity of flint nodules and a creamy

yellow mortar, suggesting demolition rubble from a flint and mortar structure' (Parsons 1999, 4.1.2; masonry suggests a Norman date). Also likely to be late Saxon in origin are the two watermills (below); evidence of late 9<sup>th</sup> century interference with the flow of the river (below) may relate to the mill approached by Mill Street itself. Whether this is the case or not, it shows that this area was a focus from the 10<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

#### **2.4 The medieval town (Figs. 4, 5)**

After the conquest a new manorial centre was built on a new site: this was Berkhamsted Castle. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle records that Duke William came to Berkhamsted after the battle of Hastings to receive the surrender of the archbishop of York and the Saxon nobles, and it is likely that the castle was built at the time of, or soon after, this visit (VCH 1908, 162). It was built here because of its strategic location on one of the main routes between London and the Midlands. In 1086 Domesday records the presence of 52 burgesses at Berkhamsted (as well as a ditch builder who presumably was in charge of the castle earthworks). This was a radical shift from the old centre at Northchurch.

The new town grew up on Akeman Street and not at the castle gate, but this was evidently dictated by topography. The castle, guarding the route through the Chilterns, was built on a massive scale above the marshy ground of the valley bottom. Sufficient space for the earthworks could only be found across the river from the highway, and 'the favourable terrain in which the castle was situated (at the end of a dry valley where it joined the Bulbourne valley) meant that natural springs could be used to supplement its defences' (Doggett & Hunn 1985, 28). It is possible that the castle site also relates to the ancient earthwork of Grim's Ditch, which guarded the valley from prehistoric times. The deerpark may soon have followed, outside the earthworks to the west, north and east. It covered a much larger area than the post-medieval Old Park (Birtchnell 1972, endpapers). A ditch cut by the footings of a new house in Bridgewater Road is on the line of the park boundary (inf. Alex Thompson; HER 11777), but its date is uncertain.

The Domesday entry for the manor of Berkhamsted, held by the Count of Mortain, records 14 villeins, 15 cottagers, six slaves, the ditcher, and Ranulf the count's servant. These represent 37 households, with ploughland, meadow, pasture, and woodland. An interesting feature was a large vineyard. There was also a priest. Within the manor was also the *burbiun*, with the 52 burgesses, and two watermills. It is possible that the figure of 52 burgesses was a copyist's mistake, and should be only 12 burgesses (Doggett & Hunn 1985, 22). It is not known whether the borough recorded in 1086 was a new, Norman, foundation or whether there was already a trading nucleus in the late Saxon period. If there were such a place, it was not necessarily in same place on the highway as the medieval marketplace (see below), and it might have been regarded as a borough by ancient right. It was not until 1156 that Henry II gave official recognition to the town's rights and privileges.

What survives of the medieval town's topography and buildings relates to the period after c1200. There is some reason to suppose that before this date it may have looked rather different.

#### **The town's early topography (Fig. 4)**

Evidence is presented here for changes in the topography of the town which reflect its growth from this period. The town's prosperity derived from trade along the highway, as well as its association with the castle. It has the triangular market-place and burgage plots typical of a medieval market town, but when these were laid out is uncertain. The plan may originally have been a more simple one. 'As the ancient road from Windsor, which now terminates at the bottom of Chesham Road, is exactly in line with the original entrance to the castle, it is likely that in early times the road continued straight on to the castle' (Birtchnell 1972, 13); property boundaries survived along this putative earlier line (recorded on the 1839 tithe map: Doggett & Hunn 1985, fig. 2), and it is in Chesham Road that Saxo-Norman pottery has been found. An early settlement nucleus might possibly lie undiscovered in the area between the highway and the castle.

The town's historic parish church, St Peter's, presents a further conundrum. No part of it predates the 13<sup>th</sup> century; the chancel, the oldest part of the fabric, dates to c1200. There must have been an earlier church, although it is not known when the new parish was carved out of St Mary's. No archaeological investigation has been carried out at St Peter's, although it is possible that there was a Norman (and smaller) church on the site. 'Irregularities in the ground plan of St Peter's, a crude blocked arch in the west wall of its north transept and portions of a mid 12<sup>th</sup> century font found in the restoration of 1871 all suggest that the present building is not the first on the site' (Doggett & Hunn 1985, 23). If this is the case, and if Chesham Road continued on to the castle gate, it would have stood at the crossroads. Castle Street may have come into existence as a diversion of this street grid at the rebuilding of the church c1200.

But there is more to the matter than this (*ibid.*, 22-4). There are references in 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century documents to a church of St James, with its own graveyard; the use of the word *ecclesia* (church) rather than *capella* (chapel) implies parochial status, and the possession of burial rights supports it. The fact that the annual fair was held on the Feast of St James is also considered supporting evidence. Other records place the church of St James 'on or near the position of the present Post Office, at the junction of the High Street with St John's Well lane' (*ibid.*, 23); a charter of c1217 refers to land 'from the road called Water lane to the church of St James', close to the hospital of St John the Baptist (below). Salmon referred in 1728 to human remains being found here, and in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century bones and foundations were 'constantly discovered very near the surface' (J W Cobb, quoted by Doggett & Hunn, 23); but it is not known if the cemetery is that of the church or the hospital (or both).

On present evidence, then, it can be argued that the original parish church was that of St James, and St Peter's was built on a different site at a later date. The parish was carved out of the much larger parish of St Mary, presumably in the late 11<sup>th</sup> or early 12<sup>th</sup> century to serve the borough. 'The mention of land called *Oldeburgh* next to the cemetery of St

James in the 1357 survey may be significant' (Doggett & Hunn 1985, 27). It implies an early focus of settlement at the west end of the High Street. The apparent site of St James, however, is a curious one for the parish church, at the parish and borough's western entrance. This may reflect a relationship with an existing holy place, St John's Well (Doggett & Hunn 1985, 24). Recent work on the extent of marshland (see below) has indicated that this area was a peninsula of more solid ground jutting into the marsh, which may account for the early focus here.

The new church, St Peter's, appears to be deliberately placed in a prominent position close to the market place and approach to the castle. Geoffrey fitz Piers, Earl of Essex and holder of the castle at the time, will have been the founder of the new church, which was to reflect the growing prosperity of the town.

The burgage plots line the main highway, as far as the putative site of the original parish church. It is possible that the burgage plots are also part of the early 13<sup>th</sup> century layout. Recent studies of peat formation along the river, and reclamation of the boggy ground, are relevant here. Radiocarbon dating has revealed that peat began to form in the area of Castle Mill in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century, implying that at this date the previously free-flowing river was impeded and the ground became boggy. Human interference appears to have been the cause; possibly the construction of a millpond to serve the Upper Mill (Hunn 2003, 14). This suggests that at least one of the watermills recorded at Berkhamsted in 1086 was of long standing. From late Saxon times the ground north of the High Street was boggy, but from the 13<sup>th</sup> century was being actively consolidated: on the Waitrose site extensive peat deposits and water channels were succeeded by alluvium and dumps of 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century debris, pits and ditches (Guttmann 1996a; Guttmann 1996b, 5). At no.286-90 High Street, close to the Waitrose site, was a similar deposit (Seddon & Murray 2000), and at no.256 High Street waterlogged peat and preserved organic remains (a wooden bowl and leather shoe soles) were found within a few metres of the street frontage (Hunn 1998b). But at 238 High Street the natural behind the street was a sandy clay (Hunn 1999); and behind nos.296-8 High Street it was gravelly clay. These findings suggest that boggy conditions with water channels and peat formation approached the street frontage for some distance west of Mill Street, but that the area where the putative church of St James stood was more solid ground. Beyond St John's Well Lane was another water channel near the street frontage (Walker 1993); not enough of it was exposed to be able to tell whether it was a stream or the river itself. The figure shows the approximate extent of bog in this part of the town, where consolidation, apparently carried out in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, enabled the laying out of new burgage plots.

At the rear of Cooper's works next to Raven's Lane was a further extensive peat deposit, with much 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century Hertfordshire Grey Ware (Hunn 2003, 15); but very little is yet known about the extent of the peat east of Castle Street. More investigation is needed along the whole length of the High Street before the extents of wet and solid ground can be reliably mapped. The south side of the High Street was higher and drier, and it is noticeable (below) that the known late medieval higher-status properties lay on the south side.

### **The later medieval town (Fig. 5)**

Only archaeology, and further study of the valley peats, will help to resolve the many questions raised about the early town, but it appears that its late medieval layout, surviving in large part today, is the result of a comprehensive plan carried out from the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. This can only have been instigated by Geoffrey fitz Piers. It is possible that the scheme included, as well as the new church, and perhaps Castle Street, the laying out of a new market place of the familiar triangular form, together with rows of new burgage plots. At about the same time, Geoffrey founded two hospitals, below.

As usually occurred in medieval marketplaces, by the 16<sup>th</sup> century the stalls had been replaced by permanent buildings; the infill was known much later as Graball Row (Birtchnell 1975, xvi). The alley between Graball Row and the houses lining the north side of the market place was known as Back Lane (now Church Lane). At Berkhamsted there was no room between the hillside and the river for the 'back lane' providing rear access to the burgage plots, which was a normal feature of such town layouts.

### ***Trades***

In addition to serving the castle, and trade along the highway, the wool trade brought prosperity to Berkhamsted as well as elsewhere in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries; four wealthy Berkhamsted wool merchants were amongst a group in Bruges sent a letter by Edward III in 1332, and others are recorded (Birtchnell 1972, 69). Names such as William the Turner (*ibid.*) indicate that woodworking was already a local industry, one which came to greater prominence much later.

### ***The Hospital of St John the Baptist***

The old church of St James, and its cemetery, appears to have become the site of a hospital founded by Geoffrey fitz Piers in 1216-17, and endowed with land by Queen Isabella (Doggett & Hunn 1985, 23, 25). In 1331 its chapel, possibly the old church itself, was rebuilt. St John's Well was a spring which appears in medieval records, and was even in the 19<sup>th</sup> century reputed to cure sore eyes. This reputation may have been of long standing, implying a 'holy well'; the bishop of Lincoln regarded it as an ancient focus of popular superstition. The water ran down St John's Lane to the river until it dried up in the 1930s (Birtchnell 1972, 118); how it relates to the water channel observed at no.320A High Street (above) is unknown.

Fitz Piers also founded another hospital, that of *St John the Evangelist*. While the documentary record for this second hospital is rather better, its site is unknown. It is assumed that it lay somewhere at the eastern end of the town (since there is an apparent reference to it 'at the town's end'), but nothing has been found. It is just possible that three burials seen in 1976 when housing was built in the old Rectory grounds east of Chesham Road (HER 4900) might relate to this hospital. One was recorded by the Berkhamsted & District Archaeological Society. It lay in the bank at the edge of Priory Gardens; it was apparently buried without a coffin in a shallow grave cut into the clay, and was aligned east-west. These characteristics imply a medieval (or late Saxon) date. In the 1520s both foundations were dissolved, and their revenues used as part of the endowment for Berkhamsted School (*ibid.*, 26).

## **Surviving elements of medieval Berkhamsted**

### ***The castle***

The Norman earthworks are the dominant surviving feature of the castle, but once the Conquest was achieved their defensive role was a minor element. The original timber structures were replaced by stone from the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century. The entrance was approached from Castle Street. An early 17<sup>th</sup> century plan shows the position of this gatehouse, which survived until the arrival of the railway in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Berkhamsted Castle was a high-status residence in good hunting country, with a deerpark, and the administrative centre for extensive estates (Birtchnell 1972, 18). Those given the castle were close royal connections, but changed frequently. It was Geoffrey fitz Piers who made the most impact on the town, in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. Much new building work at the castle was undertaken by Richard, earl of Cornwall, who held the castle in 1243-72. Edward III and the Black Prince both used the castle frequently, but gradually it became outdated and uncomfortable, and essentially redundant. It was abandoned in 1495, and subsequently robbed of its stone for the construction of Berkhamsted Place and new buildings in the town. It remains one of the best surviving motte and bailey castles in the country.

### ***St Peter's church***

The 13<sup>th</sup> century St Peter's is a very large church. The chancel, of c1200, was rapidly followed by the crossing piers and transepts. The nave dates to late in the same century. Work continued through the 14<sup>th</sup> and earlier 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, finishing with a clerestory added to the nave, and the upper parts of the tower, built 1535-6. 'The crossing tower dominates the external appearance of the large flint-built church. It is big and powerful...' (Pevsner 1977, 96). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the exterior was covered with stucco by Wyattville c1820, and Butterfield restored it in 1866-88 (his interior decoration has now largely gone). Attached to the south-west corner of the church was what may have been a church house (Birtchnell 1975, 5). This was demolished in 1826, as it projected out into the High Street. Other structures may have stood in the churchyard, which may once have extended further west: many human bones were found when the churchyard wall opposite the west end of the church was rebuilt in 1996 (*Berkhamsted Review* January 1996, 5).

### ***125 High Street***

A house and shop (HER 9193) opposite St Peter's church, a two-storeyed timber-framed building with a north range parallel to the street and a wider wing. In this wing is one bay of a 14<sup>th</sup>-century open hall, the plan of which suggests that it once had a second bay of similar size (a length of 8m in all). This was an unusually large house. Smith (1992, 143) notes that if it were not for the proximity of the castle its size and position would suggest a manor house. Possibly it did have some manorial function or accommodated royal officials (as no.129 did), especially once the castle became old-fashioned and uncomfortable; it was certainly of high status, and in a central position. The street range was probably built in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, and at the same time an upper floor was inserted into the medieval hall. In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century the hall wing was extended to the south, and it was probably at this date that a pilastered brick front was added (Smith

1993, 31). It was much altered in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when a carriage entrance was added at the eastern end and the frontage updated.

### ***129 High Street (Dean Incent's House)***

This house apparently belonged to Dean Incent's father Robert, who was secretary to Cicely, Duchess of York at the Castle (Hastie 1999, 21), so it is possible that the Dean was born here. John Incent became Dean of St Paul's Cathedral in 1540, at the dissolution. The oldest part of the building is the south-west wing, which is of an uncertain but late medieval (15<sup>th</sup> century) date, and which may have once extended to the street frontage (Smith 1993, 31). The present street range was built in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century (after the Dean's time), a three-bay jettied range of two storeys with the hall in the centre bay, and a cellar below the east room. Following the construction of this new front the late medieval rear part may have been relegated to the status of a kitchen (Smith 1992, 158, with plan). The front range hall and its upper room have surviving early 17<sup>th</sup> century wall paintings. In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century new windows at the front and an attic floor were added, and c1800 a small south-east wing was built.

### ***The Swan, 139 High Street***

The Swan was one of the main inns during the coaching era, and later a principal hotel. It was a wine tavern in 1656 (Hastie 1999, 86). The timber-framed building (HER 9284) has a two-storey range along the street, with roof timbers partly of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Behind this the rear wing retains parts of an early 15<sup>th</sup> century open-hall house. The street range was extended to the west c1500, and it may have been at this early date that a chimney stack was inserted between the older and newer portions. In the late 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century the front range was extended in the other direction, and an upper floor and chimney put into the hall. Although the Swan was recorded in 1607 (Branch Johnson 1963, 45), there is no structural evidence for the building being an inn until the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, when a gallery was added to the west of the hall range. This hall range was extended c1800, when the Swan ran its own coach to London (Smith 1992, 151; 1993, 32). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the inn had its own brewery. This was normal practice, but the Swan Brewery expanded into a flourishing business (see below). The inn closed in the mid 1980s.

### ***173 High Street***

Incorporating structural timbers felled in the period 1277-97, this is (at present) the earliest known jettied urban building surviving in England. It is a two-storey, two-bay timber-framed building with a crown-post roof, standing end-on to the High Street, and originally formed the service (eastern) end of a larger house which has disappeared (Moir 2003, 101-2). A cellar beneath the front bay is brick lined, but may originally have been a medieval undercroft. A chimney was added probably in the 17<sup>th</sup> century; in the 19<sup>th</sup> century the building was refronted and became a shop. Its true date was discovered during alterations in 2000 (Bridge 2000).

### ***207-9 High Street***

Built as one house in the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> century, with a timber frame on a brick and flint base. The centre (hall) bay has a crown-post roof, and the passage through the

building to the right of this bay may derive from the original screens passage. At the rear, short wings have been added to the outer two bays, and may be rebuilt from earlier wings. An upper floor was inserted into the hall in the mid to late 17<sup>th</sup> century. The left gable shows the line of the original steep-pitched roof. The brick chimney stacks are 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century. The present roof, windows and shop front are 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century; the building was ‘carefully rebuilt’ in the early 1990s (Dacorum Local Plan 1995, 37); it is uncertain what actually remains of the original structure (Hastie 1999, 93).

### ***Church Cottages, 84-96 High Street, Northchurch***

A two-storey building with an L plan, the roadside wing being three bays long and of close-set timber framing with oversailing upper floor and colour-washed brick nogging. This wing dates to the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century. The wing overlooking the churchyard is an addition, with wider-spaced timbers. The roof is tiled; the gables have 19<sup>th</sup> century bargeboards. The building is also known as Northchurch Almshouses.

Close examination may reveal a previously unsuspected medieval date for other buildings in the town. In view of the royal connections, it is not surprising that there were high-status houses near Castle Street (and as noted above, they stood on the south side of the High Street, away from marshy ground); but not enough is yet known about the High Street’s buildings to reach any overall conclusions on their date, status and degree of survival.

### ***Butts Meadow***

This field, bought in 1886 and given to the town in order to preserve it, was thought to be the site of medieval archery butts. Practice with the longbow was a legal requirement during the 14<sup>th</sup> century; the statute was revived in 1543 in response to the threat of a French invasion and was in force well into the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Friar 1991, 44). Archery butts ‘usually comprised low mounds against which the targets were placed’ (although most examples of the placename refer to headlands of open fields, and not archery at all). ‘The site of the butts and the place where the archers stood to shoot could be traced until 1932’, when Butts Meadow was levelled to provide local employment (Birtchnell 1972, 99). The butts may have been no older than 16<sup>th</sup> century in origin.

### ***Mills***

Domesday records the presence of two late Saxon watermills at Berkhamsted in 1086, and it is assumed that these were on the sites of the Upper and Lower Mills. They appear to be identifiable in late 13<sup>th</sup> century Castle accounts, as the Castle’s mill and Bank Mill (Hunn 1998a, 6). By 1559 they are recorded as Upper and Lower Mills. Other watermills (at this date possibly fulling mills) are mentioned in 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century documents (Hunn 1998a, 6), but where they stood is unknown and they do not appear in later records. There is nothing to relate them to the Castle Mill, which is 19<sup>th</sup> century.

*Upper Mill* (Birtchnell 1975, xiii, 21; HER 7087) was in an appropriate position for a manorial mill, between the castle and the High Street and approached by Mill Street itself. It may have origins in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century (see above). In 1616 the miller was George Collins. In 1926 the mill itself was replaced with the Berkhamsted School music

school, and a curved wall built over the river with a Latin inscription commemorating the site; the mill bridge survives.

In 1616 the miller at the *Lower Mill*, in Bank Mill Lane (HER 7098), was Richard Besouth. In 1650 the mill was 'out of repair' (Hunn 1998a, 6). The mill itself burnt down in the 1890s, by which time there was insufficient water in the river to operate it (Hastie 1999, 41); the mill house, now the Old Mill Hotel, is an 18<sup>th</sup> century building with later additions (see below). The mill race survives, and work on the site in 1998 revealed a late 18<sup>th</sup> century timber revetment of the millpond and fragments relating to earlier structures (Hunn 1998a, 22-4).

## **2.5 The post-medieval town (Figs. 6, 7)**

A physical reminder of new directions taken in the 16<sup>th</sup> century lies in the re-use of stone from the castle ruins in some of the town's new buildings: a mansion, grammar school, market house and court house (Birtchnell 1972, 13). The 16<sup>th</sup> century saw the town in economic decline, with the loss of royal favour (Hastie 1999, 38) and the rise of Hemel Hempstead. This decline is perhaps reflected in the small numbers of surviving 16<sup>th</sup> century buildings, compared with the many dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Detailed study might, however, alter this impression.

In 1618 James I gave Berkhamsted a charter of incorporation, apparently 'as a reward or bribe to the townspeople for not opposing the enclosure of a portion of the Common' (ibid., 57, 94). The town was now a free borough, with a Corporation which could regulate the market and impose fines and build a jail for wrongdoers. Compared with the Vestry, however, the Corporation, which met in the Court House, had little money and struggled to operate through the difficult period of the Civil War and Commonwealth. Much of the market's trade was being lost to Hemel Hempstead (given borough status and a market in 1539), and no money was found to build the town jail (see below). In 1661-2 two bailiffs died in succession and the Corporation folded shortly afterwards (Birtchnell 1972, 13, 57). The market house, built in the marketplace in 1587 (Smith 1992, 156; 1993, 32), had the usual form of a timber-framed room standing over an open understorey of timber columns. It burnt down in 1854.

It was the Vestry which provided parish amenities. Poor families were housed in the small house attached to the south-west corner of St Peter's until it was demolished after 1820, and in a row of tenements to the west along the High Street, bought during the reign of Charles I and known as Ragged Row. Nearby, at what is now the corner of Park View Road, was the parish workhouse, 'a wretched, straw-thatched building' (Birtchnell 1972, 61).

### ***Berkhamsted Place***

In 1580 the manor of Berkhamsted was leased to Sir Edward Carey. The property included the ruinous castle and the deer park. Sir Edward built 'a large House on a different site out of the Ruins of the Castle' (Salmon 1728, 122), on the hilltop 500m

beyond the castle earthworks. As the house was acquired in 1610 by Henry, Prince of Wales, it was sequestrated during the Civil War and described in a survey in 1650. It was a grand building, one of the few of the period to be built in courtyard plan on a new site, and not the product of gradual growth (Smith 1992, 48-9). After a fire in 1661 more than half the house was demolished (by John Sayer, the builder of the almshouses), reducing it to a half-H plan (ibid., 71-2; Birtchnell 1975, xiv, 26). In contrast to other towns, dominated by resident aristocrats, the various owners of Berkhamsted Place made little impact on the development of the town. Most of what survived of the house was demolished in 1967, and the grounds built over. 'Many worked stones, some almost certainly from the chapel of the castle, were found when Berkhamsted Place was pulled down' (Birtchnell 1972, 28). An approximate plan of the house was recovered in 1983 (Thompson & Holland 1984). Surviving fragments consist of part of the north-west front, of chequerboard flint and ashlar; *Ash*, now a two-storey house of whitewashed brick on a rubble base; and *The Keep*, two storeys and attics, the core of which is mainly of flint and rubble, with some red brick and timber framing. To this 16<sup>th</sup> century centre extensions were added in the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century, of flint rubble with brick facing. Part of *Ash* is traditionally Anglo-Saxon, but there appears to be no real evidence to consider this to be the case. The *Keep* was used as a gardener's cottage.

***The Great Barn*** at Castle Hill Farm, the home farm at Berkhamsted Place, is a probably 16<sup>th</sup> century farm building of weatherboarded timber framing. Much of the original framing survives, although part has been rebuilt in red brick and it has recently deteriorated. As it stands it is six bays long, although there were probably once more bays at the north-west end. The south-west side has an aisle; the outshuts and midstrey on the north-east side are later.

New amenities gradually appeared in the town, partly replacing some of the functions of the old hospitals.

### **Berkhamsted School**

The Grammar School (HER 9189) was founded by John Incent, Dean of St Paul's, and granted a licence by the king in 1541 (Birtchnell 1972, 45). The school suffered mixed fortunes until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, and a new headmaster from 1864 began its expansion. Extensions were built in Castle Street and Mill Street, as far as the Upper Mill. The surviving Old Building, on the north side of the church, dates to 1544, and is of red brick with stone dressings (the stone possibly re-used from the castle ruins). The centre is of one tall storey with large stone mullioned windows, and two storeys at each end each with two gables. The hall roof and chimney pieces in the end rooms all survive, although restored in 1841. The Chapel, on the west side of Castle Street, was built in 1894-5 by a local architect, Charles Henry Rew, in Tudor style: like the Old Building it is in red brick with stone dressings.

### **The Court House**

The upper floor of the building is of 16<sup>th</sup> century timber framing; the windows, and the ground floor of red brick and knapped flint, were added in 1870-71 by William Butterfield. When the Court House was restored in 1975 some of the timbers were found

to have been re-used (Mark 1975). The borough and manorial courts were held here, possibly on the site of a medieval court house; in the 17<sup>th</sup> century the short-lived Corporation met here.

### **Sayers Almshouses**

Now nos.235-41 High Street, the almshouses (HER 9292) have a central pediment bearing the inscription *The Guift of John Sayer Esq 1684*. The single-storey row, on a tall plinth, is of dark red and grey brick with a hipped tiled roof and tall chimney stacks, and six panelled doors arranged with one at each end and two pairs on either side of the pedimented projection. John Sayer was chief cook to Charles II, and rebuilt Berkhamsted Place after its disastrous fire (above). After his death in 1682 his widow Mary built the almshouses for six poor elderly widows, using money left for relief of the poor. The building is still in use, but has been altered to accommodate four rather than six. The doors front straight onto the street, each with a short flight of steps.

### ***Other surviving 16<sup>th</sup> century Listed Buildings***

#### ***296-8 High Street***

A two-storey house of the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, altered in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and with a tiled roof. It has two doors, one joined to the window by the frieze of a former shop front.

#### ***Edgeworth House, 20 High Street, Northchurch***

Originally a 16<sup>th</sup> century house of timber framing on brick foundations, remodelled in the later 18<sup>th</sup> century and given an east wing in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The main block has two storeys and a basement, a stucco front, hipped slate roof, and the date 1767 carved on the brickwork of the north-west chimney stack. The house, with elegant late 18<sup>th</sup> century interior plasterwork and exterior detailing, was the home of the novelist Maria Edgeworth and her parents in the period 1776-81 and was then known as The Limes; it was renamed Edgeworth House in 1911.

#### ***St George & the Dragon public house, 87 High Street, Northchurch***

The eastern half of this building is a late 16<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed house, altered, with the timbers exposed at the east end and in the alleyway at the other end; the western half is a mid-18<sup>th</sup> century brick house, of two storeys, with a cut bracketed doorhood. The bricks have been rendered with cement; the roof is Welsh slate.

#### ***126 High Street, Northchurch (Rosemary Cottage)***

This was Norris's Farm, a 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> century timber-framed house of one storey and attic, with red brick nogging, old tiled roof and an early red brick chimney stack. In the roof are three gabled dormers.

### ***Other surviving 17<sup>th</sup> century Listed Buildings***

#### ***The Bull, 10 High Street***

A 17<sup>th</sup> century building, two storeys, timber-framed, with a hipped tiled roof. The ground floor front, with a bow window and door hood, has been replaced and plastered, the upper floor formerly oversailing it; the timber framing is still visible in the rear wing. But although a Bull is recorded in the town in 1535, 'this was almost certainly a different

licensed house' (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 21). The present Bull is only recorded as a Victorian beerhouse, first mentioned in 1839 and given a full licence in 1904.

*Nos.80-86 High Street*

A 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier two-storey building, five bays long, of whitewashed brick and old tiled roofs; much altered. In the centre front is an arched carriageway, with two projecting 19<sup>th</sup> century shop fronts on the left and a 20<sup>th</sup> century shop on the right. The upper floor of this eastern half projects, with two gables.

Behind *no.214 High Street* (which is 20<sup>th</sup> century) is a 17<sup>th</sup> century single-storey outbuilding of weatherboarding and red brick, with an old tiled roof. It has a fine hooded doorcase on the left, with a fielded panelled door.

*275 High Street (Boxwell House)*

A late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century two-storey house of symmetrical design with central projecting bay and a steep central pediment. The brickwork has been cement rendered and the roof tiles replaced with slate. The frontage has quoins at the angles, and Roman Ionic attached columns supporting the central porch. The rear elevation has been much altered. In 1938, when Boxwell House was the Rural District Council offices, some of the oak panelling from Egerton House (demolished to make way for the Rex Cinema), was installed here (Hastie 1999, 63).

*The Lamb, 277 High Street (HER 9288)*

A 17<sup>th</sup>-century two-storey painted brick building with an old tiled roof. On the left is a door and window under a bracketed hood, and on the right a pair of doors under another bracketed hood. At the west end an external chimney stack is attached to the front (Meadows 2001, 24). It is only recorded as a beerhouse from 1869, although it was 'undoubtedly' founded at an earlier date (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 22).

*The Boote, 37 Castle Street*

A timber-framed building with the date 1605 on the front, which has stucco on the ground floor and plaster on the upper floor, under a slate roof. Also on the ground floor are four canted bay windows under a continuous frieze and cornice. The Boote tavern closed in 1920 (Meadows 2001, 32).

*Gossoms Lodge, 59 Gossoms End*

A mid 17<sup>th</sup> century house, two storeys, of a simple two-room plan with internal chimney stack and lobby entrance (Smith 1993, 31). In c1800 a rear wing 'no doubt replaced earlier service accommodation; the Gothick porch was added and Gothick windows inserted then' (ibid.). The ground floor is stuccoed, the upper floor covered in 19<sup>th</sup> century hanging tiles. The top of the central chimney stack is now of bricks laid in a spiral pattern.

*Gossoms Cottage, 60 Gossoms End*

A two-storey house on an L plan, altered in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The front is stucco, the roof steeply pitched and of old tiles. At the back elevation is a chimney stack with two tall diagonal shafts. The house is supposed to date to 1691 (Meadows 2001, 26).

*Nos.62-3 Gossoms End*

A timber-framed building, with later front (red and grey chequerboard upper floor and cement-rendered ground floor) and old tiled roof. The two boarded doors have a single central doorhood.

*69-73 High Street, Northchurch*

A two-storey house of colour-washed brick with tiled roof; on the right is an early 19<sup>th</sup> century shop front, altered.

*79 High Street, Northchurch*

A two-storey house, altered and roughcast, with two ground floor canted bays and cut bracketed doorhood, under an old tiled roof.

*Kingshill (Kingshill Way)*

A large two-storey brick house facing north, irregular in plan due to additions of various dates: wings to north-west and north-east in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a parallel rear range in the early 19<sup>th</sup>, north-west service extensions in the 19<sup>th</sup> and south-east wing in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The older parts are plastered with red tile roofs, later parts stucco with slate roofs. The 17<sup>th</sup> century front has a central door with moulded surround and entablature, and an original window to its left; that on the right is a copy. In 1968 the house became the home of the National Film Archive (Hastie 1999, 60). The associated granary is a 19<sup>th</sup> century Listed Building, a single-storey square structure of timber framing with weatherboarding, and a pyramidal slate roof. The whole is raised on nine cast iron staddles.

*The Old Cottage, Bank Mill Lane*

Built c1647, two storeys, with a red brick ground floor and timber-framed upper floor with red brick nogging, and old tiled roof. The two brick chimney stacks are early; the gabled porch is a later addition.

## **2.6 The coaching era (Fig. 7)**

Berkhamsted was a staging post on the London to Aylesbury road during the coaching era, which began in the later 17<sup>th</sup> century at the time when the Corporation failed. The Sparrows Herne Turnpike Trust, set up in 1762 (Albert 1972, 210), was responsible for the 27 miles of highway from Bushey Heath to Aylesbury, via Watford, Berkhamsted and Tring (Branch Johnson 1970, 105). The nearest tollgate to Berkhamsted was at Newground, beyond Cow Roast. The peak of prosperity from coaching came during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. It lasted until the construction of the railways in the late

1830s and 1840s, which very rapidly ended the coaching trade in the county. The turnpike trust was wound up in 1873.

New features of the 18<sup>th</sup> century included the building of grand mansions and the opening of a charity school; the appearance of town houses in the High Street reflects growing prosperity. The main surviving relics of the coaching era are the remaining inns.

### **Inns**

Most of these stood around the market place, in the town centre. The proportion of Berkhamsted's surviving coaching inns is small compared with other Hertfordshire towns. Some do survive, although not all are still licensed. The Swan, a medieval building (139 High Street), is described above.

#### *The Queen's Arms, 53 High Street*

Nos.51-3 constitute a single 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier timber-framed building under a steeply pitched tiled roof, much altered. No.53, the Queen's Arms, was first recorded in 1607 (Branch Johnson 1963, 44) and gave up its licence in 1968 (Hastie 1999, 78). It has been 'restored' with red brick nogging in the timber framing visible on the upper floor, and has an oriel canted bay window which is visible in an early photograph, c1860 (Birtchnell 1975, 32). No.51 is mainly covered in stucco, and has a symmetrical 19<sup>th</sup> century front of two gables with central doorway flanked by two-storey canted bay windows. The 1860 photograph shows these two properties in rather different form, a plain plastered timber-framed building in use as two cottages (now no.51) and the Queen's Arms, with the bay window and an additional shopfront at the corner.

#### *The Goat, 83 High Street*

First recorded in 1782 (Branch Johnson 1963, 43), the Goat 'was a favourite halt for cattle drovers on their way to London', and pounded their cattle nearby (hence Three Close Lane). The Goat was rebuilt in 1841 as a two-storey early Victorian brick public house and is not Listed.

#### *The Crown, 145 High Street*

Built in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, two storeys with oversailing upper floor, with a half-hipped gable on the left and slate roof. The front was refaced with stucco in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It has a canted bay window on the left and carriageway on the right. The earliest record of The Crown is recorded from 1734 (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 22); its name has altered many times and it was the Chaffcutters between 1790 and 1852.

#### *The King's Arms, 147 High Street*

Built as an inn in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Smith 1992, 139; 1993, 31-2); largely a timber-framed building, but with front and east walls of chequered brickwork. The plan on the long narrow site was of a long range of rooms down one side of the yard, with a main carriage entrance on the remainder of the frontage and a side entrance in the side street. The inn was originally of two storeys but in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century major alterations were made: a third storey was built, the rear wing was widened and the interior modified, and a large assembly room was built on the west side of the yard. A slate roof and three oriel

bay windows on the first floor were added in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. Recorded from 1716, the King's Arms flourished as a coaching inn during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, hosting public events and the petty sessions; it also acted as the post office (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 22) and ran its own coach service to London (Branch Johnson 1963, 43). The assembly room is an example of adaptation to changing times, providing a local amenity instead of bedrooms for the coaching trade. The arms are those of Queen Anne.

#### *The Bell, Market Place*

The Bell, often called the One Bell to distinguish it from the Five Bells across the street, stood next to the Market House at the end of the row of buildings which represent infill in the marketplace. It narrowly escaped destruction when the Market House burnt down in 1854, but was demolished in 1959 (Birtchnell 1975, xi, 10-11, 13).

#### *The Five Bells (163-5 High Street)*

17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier, two storeys, with plaster upper floors and 20<sup>th</sup> century ground floor shop fronts (now again in single use), under tiled roofs. No.163 is taller than 165, which has a dormer window in the roof and attics. A yellow brick boundary wall on the property, with bricked-up windows, survives from a malting (HER 7092) recorded here behind no.163 on the 1839 tithe map. Most inns brewed their own beer until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century. No.165 previously had a coach works in the yard behind (Casserley 2002). The Five Bells lost its licence in the 1870s (Hastie 1999, 87).

#### *The town jail*

Prisoners were either housed in the parish lock-up or sent to Hemel Hempstead until 1764, when a row of small tenements at the corner of Cocks Lane (Kings Road) was converted into a jail. Birtchnell (1972, 63, 64) shows photographs of the buildings, which were never made secure enough to prevent prisoners from escaping. In 1843 the jail became the town's first police station (VCH 1908, 164). The buildings were demolished in 1894 in order to widen Kings Road, and a new police station was built on part of the site. This was replaced in 1972.

#### *The parish fire engine*

In 1788 a fire engine was bought by public subscription, and housed in a small room at the south-west corner of the nave of St Peter's. 'The words "Engine House" were painted above a door, walled up in 1871 [during Butterfield's restoration], a few feet to the right of the great west door' (Birtchnell 1972, 32, 64).

#### *The parish pest house (Fig. 6)*

Moor Cottage (HER 11593) was built at the southern edge of the Common in 1774 by Berkhamsted Vestry for the isolation of those with smallpox and other infectious diseases (Bryant 1986, 31; Birtchnell 1972, 65). It still stands in its enclosure at the end of a path, in an isolated position. Inoculation brought an end to the need for a pest house by the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but 'even in 1856 it was still being let on condition that the tenants received infectious patients under their roof when required' (Bryant, op. cit.). It is now a private house. Northchurch parish pest house also survives, as Woodside Cottage on Northchurch Common.

### ***The Bourne School***

Thomas Bourne (1656-1729), Master of the Company of Framework Knitters, bequeathed money to build and endow a charity school in Berkhamsted for 20 boys and 10 girls. This was no.222 High Street, the front of which was rebuilt in 1854 in Jacobean style red brick: two storeys under a tiled roof with five gabled dormers, four plain and a central Dutch gable, on the upper floor. Over the stone arched central doorway is a stone panel (Victorian) with shields bearing Thomas Bourne's coat of arms. On the roof ridge is a square cupola. The rebuilding was paid for by General Finch of Berkhamsted Place (Birtchnell 1972, 28; Pevsner 1977, 98). It is not clear if any part of the building predates 1854. In 1875 the pupils were transferred to the National School and the funds used for scholarships.

### ***The Rectory***

The Old Rectory, where the poet William Cowper (1731-1800) lived as a child, stood in large grounds in Rectory Lane, on the hillside. This rectory (apparently a large timber-framed building) was demolished by John Crofts, rector 1810-50, and replaced with a new one on a different site to the south. A new cemetery was opened on adjacent land in the middle of the century, to provide additional space for the parish. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Crofts' rectory was given up and a third rectory was built on the site of the original (HER 9302; Birtchnell 1972, 107-8).

### ***Surviving 18<sup>th</sup> century Listed Buildings***

Several houses at the High Street end of Castle Street survive from this period, as do quite a few buildings in the High Street itself. Berkhamsted was acquiring the overall appearance of a prosperous Georgian town, although the fashionable brick front of nos.141-3 High Street is certainly hiding an older structure and others may be doing the same. One high-status house now gone was Pilkington Manor, an 18<sup>th</sup> century house which stood on the south side of the High Street west of the Dower House, no.108. Pilkington was not a medieval manor; it is only recorded, as a head tenement, from 1616 (VCH 1908, 164). The house was demolished in 1959 (Meadows 2001, 9).

#### ***Castle Street***

*Nos.1-4:* four two-storey houses, refronted with stucco in the early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century to bring them up to date, under a steeply pitched roof with tiles at the front and Welsh slates at the rear. Two of them have 20<sup>th</sup> century shop fronts; no.4 has a rear wing.

#### ***High Street, north side:***

*No.120 (Gordon Cottage):* built in the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century, a two-storey house with off-centre panelled door, fanlight and Doric pilasters; now roughcast and under a hipped roof of Welsh slates.

*Nos.130-32:* the street frontage is of plum and red brick, two storeys and attics with cornice and gabled dormers in an old tiled roof; it is possible that the house behind the

frontage is older. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the building was converted into shops with four canted bay windows under a continuous hood.

*No.218*: an early 18<sup>th</sup> century three-storey four-bay town house, with a brick front and rendered timber-framing behind (see Smith 1993, 31). No. 218 is the Listed building (although Listed as nos.214-16A), and was previously Ward's drapers shop, first recorded in 1790 (Hastie 1999, 94). It is now part of a department store housed in nos.212-220. Nos.212-216 and 220 are a 1960s extension 'which involved demolishing an old property at the east end. Despite this, its original timbers were retained in the new department store' (Hastie 1999, 94). Smith (1992, 164) notes of no.214 that 'only the first-floor room overlooking the street remains encapsulated in a large shop'. The outbuilding to the rear of no.214 is 17<sup>th</sup> century (see above).

*High Street, south side:*

*No.113 (The Red House)* (HER 12122): a large red brick town house, three storeys with dormers in a steeply pitched hipped roof behind a wooden eaves cornice, and a central projecting bay with a large Venetian window above a central Roman Ionic porch with entablature and pediment. Until his death in 1830 this was the home of the Rev George Nugent, rector of Bygrave, who bequeathed money for the building of a new parish workhouse (below; Hastie 1999, 22-3). John Tawell, hanged in 1845 for a murder in Slough and the first murderer to be caught by means of the electric telegraph, lived at the Red House (Birtchnell 1972, 115). Joined to the neighbouring property, it is now 'The Red and White House'. The White House was built in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century by a new owner of the Red House, Joseph Robinson, for members of his family. The two properties were separated on Robinson's death in 1883; it is not certain if they were originally used as one (Hastie 1999, 64).

*No.137*: an early 18<sup>th</sup> century house, two storeys, stuccoed and with a roof of old tiles. The main door is in the centre, with architrave surround, frieze and cornice. There is a back wing, also of colour-washed brick.

*Nos.141-3*: a two-storey building with an 18<sup>th</sup> century front, stuccoed, masking an earlier structure under an old tiled roof. The front has been altered with a 19<sup>th</sup> century fascia and cornice over 20<sup>th</sup> century shop windows.

*No.189 (Barclays Bank; Sydney House)*: an early 18<sup>th</sup> century town house of red and blue-grey chequered brickwork, two storeys under tiled roof, the central door with Doric pilasters, entablature, pediment and fanlight. The back wing extends up Kings Road. The western (right) half on the High Street is a 20<sup>th</sup> century imitation wing with similar doorway, built c1960.

*Other buildings:*

*47 Highfield Road*

A late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century house of chequered plum and red brick, two storeys, under a Welsh slate roof. The ground floor has an oriel bow window with pilasters, a panelled door under an arch, and a similar arch over a passage on the right. Highfield

Road led up the hill towards Highfield, a substantial late 18<sup>th</sup> century house demolished in the 1930s (Hastie 1999, 62). No.47 may have been an inn known at one time as the Chaffcutters Arms, and converted into two cottages by 1850 (Hastie 1999, 78). Highfield Road itself was not developed until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century (ibid., 66).

*127 High Street, Northchurch (Exhims)*

Built of brown brick with red brick dressings, two storeys and attics under a hipped roof of Welsh slate and with two box dormers.

*Lower Mill (Old Mill House Hotel)*

The miller's house, of grey and plum brick with red brick dressings, two storeys and attics under an old tiled roof with dormers. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century (between the 1839 and 1878 maps) the house was doubled in size (the left half) using matching materials, and the south entrance given a gabled porch. Adjoining are the remains of the 18<sup>th</sup> century mill itself, damaged by fire in the 1890s and converted into a walled garden. Late 20<sup>th</sup> century conversion of the miller's house into a public house and restaurant has removed nearly all the original internal features and infilled the 18<sup>th</sup> century cellar (Zeepvat 1998).

*Ashlyns Hall*

The house was built in the late 1780s for Matthew Raper; it is nearly square in plan, a stucco villa of two storeys and attics, and with a semicircular projection on the south side which was part of the original entrance hall (Smith 1993, 29). In 1801 the estate was bought by James Smith, and by 1838 considerable alterations had been made. The entrance was moved to the west side and a balcony on the south bow-front was altered into an iron verandah. In the later 19<sup>th</sup> century the house was the home of Augustus Smith, who was influential in local matters (notably his defeat in 1866 of attempts by Lord Brownlow of Ashridge to enclose Berkhamsted Common). Matthew Raper's house replaced an earlier one; the name of the hilltop estate goes back to Reginald Asselyn, recorded in 1314 (Birtchnell 1972, 50). The stable block is also Listed, an 18<sup>th</sup> century two-storey building of red and grey brick, on a half-H plan and with a 19<sup>th</sup> century steeple on the north-east wing. Traces of the gardens remain (HER 9554) and there is also a surviving icehouse (HER 6109). The north half of the grounds were built over by the Thomas Coram Foundation in 1933-5; these 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings became a Herts County school in 1955.

## **2.7 Berkhamsted in the 19<sup>th</sup> century**

The first major new development was the construction of the Grand Junction Canal, which began in 1793. The Canal provided a considerable economic stimulus to the town, enabling the development of industries which involved bulk transport of materials. These included timber and malt. Berkhamsted also became a centre for the construction of the barges needed for the canal trades. Further change came with the railway. Due to the Canal Berkhamsted already had the means to survive the sudden collapse of the coaching trade following the opening of the line, and the railway brought new prosperity and new trades. The town's population increased dramatically in the 1830s. Hundreds of men

arrived to work on the construction of the line and needed lodging; this boost to the local economy led to many more tradesmen appearing in the 1839 local directory than had been listed in 1824 (Birtchnell 1972, 79, 86). In 1801 the population of St Peter's parish was 1,690, and in 1851 it was 3,395 (Birtchnell 1972, 15).

For the first half of the century, the town still consisted of little more than the High Street, Castle Street and Mill Street, and this is reflected in the surviving buildings. The arrival of the railway line meant new houses in Castle Street, with the Castle Inn at the station end. At the time of the 1851 census 'the southern slopes were almost completely without houses except for ten in Chesham Road, seven in King's Road, and forty-four in Highfield Road' (Birtchnell 1975, vii). Highfield Road itself was newly built with artisans' houses (Hastie 1999, 68). But in 1851 the Pilkington Manor estate, east of Castle Street, was sold, and the land developed as an industrial area: artisans' dwellings, sawmills, and Cooper's Dip works were built. In 1868 farmland at Kitsbury was sold and streets of middle-class villas began to appear on the hill south of the High Street, eastward from Cross Oak Road (Gilhams Lane). In 1879 the land belonging to Boxwell House was sold (Hastie 1999, 68). From 1888 this was followed by more streets up the hillside, between King's Road and Cross Oak Road. This was previously part of the Kingshill estate (Meadows 2001, 6). Lower Kings Road was built by public subscription in 1885 to join Kings Road and the High Street to the station. In 1897 'hundreds of acres' of the Kingshill Estate were sold for development (Hastie 1999, 60); but the 1898 OS map shows that by the end of the century expansion was on a very small scale compared with what was to come after 1900.

#### *The Grand Junction Canal*

Connecting Birmingham with the Thames, this is the longest wide gauge barge canal in Britain, with 108 locks. Nine of these are at Berkhamsted, some of the many needed to take the canal over the Chiltern ridge. It became the Grand Union Canal in 1929. The stretch from Brentford to Berkhamsted was opened in September 1798, to Tring early the following year (Faulkner 1993, 6), and the entire canal in 1805. During construction it was noted with approval that the works were draining the marshy overflow of the river through the town. Wharves were soon built, and coal began to arrive at reasonable prices (Birtchnell 1972, 85).

#### *The London to Birmingham Railway*

The first line to be opened in Hertfordshire, the London to Birmingham Railway was opened from Primrose Hill to Tring in 1837. At Berkhamsted work had begun in 1834 with a massive earthmoving operation needed to take the line across the outer moat of the castle, and huge quantities of bricks were needed to make a stable base (Birtchnell 1972, 87). The original station (Birtchnell 1975, xiii, 22-3) was a handsome brick building in Elizabethan style, and stood almost opposite the Castle Street canal bridge. It was replaced in 1872 prior to the widening of the tracks, but continued in use as a wood-turner's workshop and as a brushworks, and did not disappear until the 1930s (Birtchnell 1975, xiii). The new station building was altered in 1964 (Branch Johnson 1970, 124; HER 5460). It retains its booking hall and some of the wooden platform canopies, as well

as a private waiting room built for Lord Brownlow on the north side (Smith & Carr 2004, 12).

## **Industry**

### *Timber*

The milling and turning of wood was the town's most prominent industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was based on the extensive woodland resources of the area, principally alder and beech, and is likely to have medieval origins; by at least the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century both Berkhamsted and Chesham were noted for turned wood products (Birtchnell 1972, 69). This was a trade of small artisans, which eventually took advantage of the bulk transport facility provided by the Grand Union Canal. Several timberyards and sawmills are shown on the 1878 OS 25 inch plan. The largest manufacturer was East & Sons, whose original yard lay on the south side of the High Street next to the Black Horse (29 High Street) (Hastie 1999, 78). East's made a variety of wooden tools and furniture including chair frames, bowls, tent pegs, brooms, shovels and hurdles. Job East came from Chesham in 1840 to take over a small shovel-maker and turner's business started in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Birtchnell 1972, 70), and began using a sawmill which employed ten men. Crimean War contracts for supplying the army with lance poles and tent pegs led to major expansion. The factory, comprising large timber workshops with machinery dating from 1861, was moved to the Gossoms End site in 1888 following a fire. It was largely demolished in the 1980s (Branch Johnson 1970, 16; HER 5711).

### *Brushmaking*

A significant offshoot of the timber industry was brushmaking. Two local firms were major employers: T H Nash in George Street, which lasted until the 1920s, and the larger Goss brushworks at the west end of the High Street, which closed in the 1930s (Hastie 1999, 44).

### *Cooper's sheep-dip works*

William Cooper was an animal doctor who arrived in Berkhamsted in the early 1840s, and experimented in treatments for scab in sheep. He eventually formulated an arsenic and sulphur sheep-dip in powder form, the first successful product of its kind. He built his first mill in Ravens Lane in 1852, and extended the works five times during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in the block between Ravens Lane and Manor Street. It included a printing works for labels. By the 1870s the company was exporting the product overseas, and behind the Lower Works in the High Street was a wharf for the unloading of sulphur, arsenic and coal for the works, and the loading of packets of Cooper's Dip for transport to the London docks. In 1925 the firm became Cooper, McDougall & Robertson Ltd, with offices and the printing works (Clunbury Press) in Manor Street, and research and development at Berkhamsted Hill. The original Dip was replaced in the mid 1950s by a range of synthetic insecticides. In 1959 the company was acquired by the Wellcome Foundation, and sold on in 1992. The Berkhamsted Hill research station was sold to an American animal health company in the late 1980s (Hastie 1999, 49-50). The Manor Street site was finally closed in 1997 and redeveloped. Nos.66-74 High Street, west of Ravens Lane, were built as Sibdon Place in 1869 for senior

employees (Casserley 2002). William Cooper himself lived at Poplars (71 High Street; Hastie 1999, 78).

### *Nurserymen*

Henry Lane's nurseryman's business, founded in 1777 (Hastie 1999, 46), became one of the largest employers in the town in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Originally specialising in hedging plants 'at a time when hedges were becoming much more common' (Birtchnell 1972, 72), the firm built a national reputation and exported plants abroad. It was also important in introducing rhododendrons and azaleas into the country, essential plants in Victorian gardens. Extensive nurseries are shown on the 1878 OS 25 inch plan, at the western end of the town.

### *Ironworking*

Wood's Ironworks was set up in 1826 by James Wood in the yard adjacent to his home, Monks House (296-8 High Street), making ironware such as candle snuffers, rat traps, and fire guards. As the business grew he began to make much larger products, greenhouses, gates, garden furniture, and his own iron-framed showroom (Hastie 1999, 47-8, 95). The showroom was destroyed by fire in 1974; Wood's continues to trade at 292-4 High Street, but primarily as the inheritor of Lane's nursery business rather than ironworking.

### *Boat-building*

A yard for building canal barges and other boats was one of three important boatyards in Hertfordshire. A barge called the *Berkhamstead Castle* was built in the town in 1801, and used for carrying hay to London and returning with coal. By 1826 the yard, between the Castle Street and Raven's Lane wharves, was owned by John Hatton, who went on to deal in coal and salt as well as boats. It was taken over by William Edmund Costin c1882 and carried on until c1910, when it became a timberyard (Faulkner 1993, 39; photo, Birtchnell 1975, 61).

### *Watercress*

Although it had been noted at the beginning of the century that the Canal had helped to drain the marshy areas along the river, it did not entirely put paid to the problem. In 1883 the *Berkhamsted Times* congratulated Mr Bedford in having converted 'dirty ditches and offensive marshes' into watercress beds (Birtchnell 1972, 73, 82). Watercress was a major crop on Hertfordshire rivers in the later 19<sup>th</sup> and earlier 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, and at the peak of the industry 2 tons a day were being sent to northern towns by rail from Berkhamsted, with more from Bourne End. Late 19<sup>th</sup> century OS maps show extensive beds along the river above the Upper Mill.

### *Castle Mill*

This was a steam mill (HER 5773) built on the north side of the canal in 1895 by J G Knowles & Son, following the construction of Lower Kings Road in 1885. The 1877 OS 25 inch plan shows an isolated wharf already in existence here, 30m east of the site of the Castle mill. The firm dealt in animal feed and seed, and operated here until c1948. The

building has been converted into offices (largely out of use in 2004), and is of red and grey brick on four floors, with six windows on each floor facing the canal.

### *Brewing and malting*

The malting industry, dominant in some east Hertfordshire towns, was not so much in evidence in Berkhamsted. It had been the town's principal industry in the reign of Elizabeth (Hastie 1999, 38), but this was only relative (above). An 1839 directory noted that brewing, malting and straw plaiting were the main industries (straw plait being women's work). The 19<sup>th</sup> century maltings largely supplied local breweries, although some was shipped elsewhere by barge on the canal. The hall at the corner of Chapel and Bridge Streets was built as a malting in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century (HER 5346). It is a yellow brick building with a malt store at right angles, and *Foster's No.2 Malting* painted on its side wall. The kiln itself has long since been demolished. Fosters owned the Swan Brewery (HER 7094), behind the Swan inn at no.137 High Street. This brewery originally supplied only the inn itself (Hastie 1999, 42), but by 1839 (when the tithe award was made) it was already run by Fosters. It was taken over by the Chesham Brewery in 1897 (Birtchnell 1972, 73).

The second High Street brewery (HER 7090) ran along the Water Lane frontage behind 168 High Street. It is recorded on the 1839 tithe award map as a brewery and malting. It belonged to Locke & Smith's, was taken over by Benskins of Watford, and closed shortly before 1914 when it was commandeered for the Inns of Court OTC Squadron (Birtchnell 1972, 73; 1975, xix, 46). The buildings mostly burnt down in 1929.

Another brewery is marked on the 1839 tithe award map, towards the north end of Castle Street near the river (HER 7089). It does not appear on the 1878 OS map. Another malting is shown on the 1839 tithe map, at 163 High Street (HER 7092). One wall of yellow brick survives as a boundary wall, with bricked-up windows.

## **Utilities**

### *Gasworks*

The Great Berkhamsted Gas, Light & Coke Co. was set up to provide street lighting in 1849 (Birtchnell 1972, 64), the gasworks being built at the junction of Water Lane and the Wilderness. It used coal delivered by canal until later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when coal was delivered by rail along a track laid from the sidings to the gasworks (Hastie 1999, 69). A single storey yellow brick building survives, now used as a school (HER 7091). In 1906 the Berkhamsted Gas Works moved to the triangle of land between the canal and the railway line east of Billet Lane. These works closed in 1959.

### *Water, sewage*

The Great Berkhamsted Waterworks Company was set up in 1864; the waterworks lay in the High Street (on the site of W H Smith and Boots). Nothing remains of the buildings (HER 5650). A high level reservoir at Kingshill was joined later by a low level reservoir in Green Lane. The water tower at Shootersway was built in 1933 (Hastie 1999, 69). No mains drainage was supplied until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the outgoing Rural

District Council and the new Berkhamsted Urban District Council installed effective sewerage in 1898-9 (ibid.).

### **Amenities**

#### *The Old Town Hall (HER 9291)*

Built in 1859 by E B Lamb, this is a two-storey building in Gothic style, in brick with diamond patterns and stone dressings. The tiled roof has two gables facing the street, and an octagonal turret with spire at the left forming an oriel. On the ground floor are three large pointed arched entrances, and at the extreme right a smaller entrance with pointed arch. A round clock on decorative iron brackets projects from the central gable (Listed Buildings description). 'The most notable Victorian contribution to the High Street' (Pevsner 1977, 98-9), the Town Hall incorporated a new market house to replace the 16<sup>th</sup> century one which had recently burnt down (and the new building was known as the Market House and Town Hall for many years). From 1860 one of the two upstairs rooms was used by the Berkhamsted Mechanics' Institute, founded in 1845. In 1888 a Sessions House was added at the back, and used until the Civic Centre opened in 1938. After falling out of use, and being threatened with demolition in 1975, the Old Town Hall has been restored by a trust set up in 1981, with community use upstairs and commercial on the ground floor (Sherwood c2000).

#### *The Workhouse*

In 1830 the Rev George Nugent, who lived at the Red House, bequeathed money for a new workhouse in the High Street at the corner of Kitsbury Road, on the site of Ragged Row, to replace the decrepit old workhouse nearby. Northchurch closed its parish workhouse in 1832 and transferred the inmates to Berkhamsted. In 1834 the new building (HER 9315) became the Union Workhouse and was in use until 1935, when its function was moved to Hemel Hempstead. The Berkhamsted building, known as Nugent House, was demolished (Birtchnell 1972, 61-2) and a 1930s shopping parade built in its place.

### **Chapels**

The town was a centre of religious nonconformity from the 17<sup>th</sup> century; about a fifth of the population were Dissenters in the second half of the century (Birtchnell 1972, 38). In the early 18<sup>th</sup> century purpose-built chapels started to appear.

#### *The Old Baptist Meeting House, Water Lane*

A Baptist meeting house was constructed in 1722. This was enlarged and used until the new chapel was built in the High Street in 1864 (Birtchnell 1972, 38). The old chapel is depicted from memory in a painting dated 1888, which also shows its burial ground next to the river (Birtchnell 1975, 5; HER 9295). 'The Baptists had another and smaller graveyard' on the east side of the Wilderness (Birtchnell 1975, x). This, the 'Old Burial Ground' is shown on the 1st edition (1878) OS 25 inch plan. Neither burial ground is shown on the 1898 edition.

#### *Baptist Church, High Street*

The new church and Sunday School, on the corner of Holiday Street, were built in 1864 in Gothic Revival style and only minor alterations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Pevsner 1977, 99;

HER 9292). It appears on the 1878 OS map as the chapel of the Particular Baptists. The plan is an asymmetrical T, with an attached Sunday School forming the head of the T. The exterior is of yellow and red brick, with a tower and spire on the street at the south-west corner. Inside is a broad nave with side aisles and all the original furniture and fittings, including the galleries. This is a 'well-composed and little altered example of mid 19<sup>th</sup> century Nonconformist architecture... which occupies a prominent street frontage position and which indicates the extension eastward of Berkhamsted's principal street in the 1860s' (Listed Buildings description).

*Friends' Meeting House, High Street*

The Quaker meeting house, with its inscription *Erected 1818*, is a simple pedimented yellow brick structure with an arched door and two arched windows, and hipped roof (Pevsner 1977, 99; Listed Buildings description; HER 9281). A very large plain porch was added in 1964, obscuring much of the original building. It is set well back from the street frontage in its burial ground, which is kept as a lawn.

*Congregational Chapel*

An Independent meeting used several buildings in Castle Street, before a chapel with classical frontage was built on the corner of Chapel Street in 1834 (Birtchnell 1975, x, 4). This was replaced by a larger church in Victorian Gothic style in 1867, in turn demolished and replaced by William Fisk House in 1974. One chest tomb survives. A United Reformed church has been built adjacent to the site on the south side of Chapel Street.

*Primitive Methodist Chapel, 346 High Street*

A purpose built chapel is shown almost opposite the Union Workhouse in the High Street on the 1878 OS plan. This, a striking structure (Hastie 1999, 106), was built in 1867 and enlarged thirty years later (Birtchnell 1972, 38). In 1976 the town's Methodists began to share All Saints, Shrublands Road, with the Anglicans, and the High Street building was replaced with a commercial building in 1979.

*Wesleyan Methodist Chapel*

Wesleyan Methodism was brought to the town by railway workers, who in 1854 opened Prospect Place Chapel at the lower end of Highfield Road. After only two years this was taken over by a group of Strict Baptists and subsequently Plymouth Brethren; the Wesleyans were less successful than the Primitive Methodists. Accommodation was then provided for the Wesleyans in the yard of builder William Nash on the site of the present Civic Centre. In 1887 a 'tin tabernacle' of corrugated iron, originally erected in Hemel Hempstead, was put up in Cowper Road. In 1923 it was given brick walls, a vestry and front porch (Hastie 1999, 105). This church was sold after the union of the town's Methodists in 1953, and the High Street church used instead (see above).

*Plymouth Brethren*

Hope Hall was built in Kings Road in 1874 for the Plymouth Brethren (the Highfield Road chapel being converted into two cottages). Hope Hall was largely rebuilt in 1969

(only the four walls remaining untouched) as the Kings Road Evangelical Church (*Berkhamsted Review* January 1969, 12).

## **Schools**

### *British School*

In 1833 Augustus Smith of Ashlyns persuaded the Vestry to approve a parish school; in 1834 a school for children of all denominations was opened on the site of the old parish workhouse. Following the formation of the School Board in 1871 the school was enlarged, and took infants from 1894 (Birtchnell 1972, 54, 55). Park View Road was constructed alongside it in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The school closed in 1971 and the buildings were demolished in 1984 (Hastie 1999, 114).

### *National School*

A school run on the principles of the Church of England was built around the Court House in 1838 (Birtchnell 1972, 54). It consisted of classrooms for 238 children and a house for the master, and is 'Courthouse School' on the 1878 OS plan. Premises for infants opened at Gossoms End in 1844. The Victoria School in Prince Edward Street was built in 1897 for the boys of the 1838 building, with the girls following a few years later.

### *Berkhamsted School for Girls*

No.222 High Street, vacated by the Bourne School in 1875, became the first premises of the Berkhamsted School for Girls in 1888, and was enlarged before the Girls moved to Kings Road in 1902. It has been used as a bank ever since. (For the Listed Building, see under the Bourne School, above.)

## **Public houses**

The coaching trade may have disappeared, but from 1830 new beerhouses flourished, and the canal trade and then the railway brought new public houses. Many of these are still licensed.

### *Castle Hotel*

The Castle, at the junction with Mill Street and facing the site of the original railway station across the canal bridge, was built c1840; as it had 'good stabling for barge horses on the canal' (Branch Johnson 1963, 42) it served both railway and canal. A Listed Building, the main three-bay range is of two storeys, in yellow stock brick with a slate roof. The central door has a stuccoed architrave and a round-arched sign recess above, and access from the upper windows to a balcony supported on four slender iron columns and with decorative cast-iron railing. In the later 19<sup>th</sup> century a lower two-storey extension was built, of two bays and with a basement. Closed in 1968, the building, with its yard and stable block, fell into poor condition. It has been restored and is now a private house.

### *The Boat, Gravel Path*

When the Boat was built is unknown, as it must have served the canalside for a long time before its appearance on the 1878 OS map (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 21). The 19<sup>th</sup> century

building, however, was demolished in the mid 1980s and rebuilt, before reopening in 1990.

*The Crystal Palace, Station Road*

On the canal bank and first referred to in 1839 as an unnamed beerhouse, it was rebuilt in 1854 to a design inspired by the 1851 Great Exhibition, to judge by its new name (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 22). It was altered in 1867-8. An 1893 photograph of the west-facing frontage shows that it included as many windows as possible, beneath a large semicircular 'fanlight' reminiscent of the Crystal Palace itself, in the gable (Hastie 1999, 27).

*The Rising Sun, Canal Side, George Street*

A photograph, apparently dating to the late 1850s, shows the Rising Sun lock before the construction of the public house (Birtchnell 1975, 50). This helps to date the building, as the earliest reference to it is in 1869, as a beerhouse (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 22). It served the canal workers, with stables for the towpath horses.

*The George, 261 High Street*

In 1839 this was still two cottages; it is referred to in 1853 as a beerhouse leased to John Henry Lane, brewer of Berkhamsted (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 22), and also one of the Lane nurserymen. It is still licensed, but is not a Listed Building.

***Other surviving 19<sup>th</sup> century Listed Buildings***

*Castle Street*

*Nos.5-8:* early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, a row of two-storey houses in plum coloured brick with red brick dressings and slate roof, and five Doric pilasters on the upper floor. At the south end is an elliptically arched carriageway; in the centre and at the north end are smaller arched passage entries. The doorways have reeded pilasters; no.8 at the north end also has an earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century shop window under a frieze and cornice.

*No.9:* like nos.5-8, this is two storeys in plum coloured brick with red brick dressings, and is of similar date. It has a small shop window with pilasters, and a cornice to the doorway.

*No.11:* similar to nos.5-8 and 9, but with flat arches upstairs and segmental arches downstairs; a central door and fanlight in a surround of slim pilasters and a cornice on consoles.

*Nos.12 & 12A:* earlier 19<sup>th</sup> century, in brick with stucco dressings, quoins and channelled ground floor. This is a three-storey building, with a continuous frieze and cornice on the ground floor over two shops.

*Nos.15 & 16:* another early 19<sup>th</sup> century pair, two storeys, stucco finish with a slate roof; two gables facing the street, each door with a canopy doorhood on wrought iron supports, and a central lamp bracket, with cast iron lamp.

*High Street, south side*

*No.29:* the Black Horse public house until some time after 1962 (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 21): an early 19<sup>th</sup> century building with stucco front, two storeys, with a parapet in front of the gabled tiled roof, and a canted oriel bay window on the ground floor. It is shown in a photograph of c1860, without the stucco finish, but with its signboard and prominent license board above the door (Birtchnell 1975, 31).

*Nos.103-9 (Egerton Terrace):* an early 19<sup>th</sup> century row of four town houses of dignified proportions, three storeys and basement in yellow brick under a hipped slate roof, with long narrow first floor windows each with wrought iron balconies, and a central arched passageway on the ground floor.

*No.117 (Admiral House):* a yellow brick two-storey house facing the top of Castle Street; early 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a slate roof, and Greek Ionic porch and steps up to the door.

*No.119:* a plain two-storey brick house, rendered, with slate roof, and wrought-iron railings with steps up to a doorway with Doric pilasters and entablature. On the right is a carriage arch. Smith (1993, 31) describes this as ‘an unremarkable early 19<sup>th</sup> century house save for one extraordinary survival. In the first-floor rear wall of the street range are exposed a wall-post and truncated tiebeam which belong to a 16<sup>th</sup> century or earlier building, the proportions and evidence of curved braces suggesting an open hall. This fragment is unrelated to anything else on the site’.

*No.121:* built c1830-40, a colour-washed yellow brick town house of three storeys and basement, but only two rooms on each floor, either side of the hallway (Smith 1993, 31). It has a roof parapet, and stone steps leading up to a tall doorway with a fine fanlight and cornice on brackets.

*No.205 (Lloyds TSB Bank):* an 1830s house in red brick, two storeys and attic, under a slate roof with a dormer at the top. The ground floor has a stucco finish with Doric pilasters and entablature, and a central closed porch with Greek Ionic columns and architrave surround to the double door. When a private house it was called The Elms, the home of a doctor (Meadows 2001, 21).

*High Street, north side*

*Nos.76-8:* built as a house in 1863, ‘a well-detailed and prominently-sited example of Victorian Gothic architecture’ (Listed Buildings description). It is of red brick with limestone dressings and blue brick diaper work, two storeys and attics on the street frontage, with a gable on the left; this has a pointed arch window at the apex with large-scale diaper work in the surrounding brickwork, giving the date, and linked initials *JR* at the apex head. To the right is the steeply-pitched roof and a gabled dormer. Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century alterations inserted shop fronts with a wide panelled door in the centre.

*No.108 (Dower House)*: a two-storey house with an early 19<sup>th</sup> century stucco front, brick side and back walls, and a slate roof with cornice and wide steep pediment. On the ground floor left is a 20<sup>th</sup> century bow shop window. This house is said to have been the dower house of Pilkington Manor (above), which stood adjacent until 1959 (Meadows 2001, 9).

*No.64 Gossoms End*

A two-storey early 19<sup>th</sup> century house of red brick with a slate roof, the frontage with pilasters and entablature, and a ground floor bow window.

## **2.8 20<sup>th</sup> century expansion**

The church of All Saints was built in Shrublands Road to serve the new housing in 1906 by Charles Henry and N A Rew, in Early English style but never completed at the west end. In 1909 the Sunnyside area was included within the Urban District, and the church of St Michael & All Angels was built in Ivy House Lane. Shortly after 1918 much of the extensive estate belonging to Berkhamsted Hall, a Georgian house at the east end of the High Street, was sold; many acres west of Swing Gate Lane were developed with Council housing. The roads east of the Lane were built privately some years later (Birtchnell 1975, xiv). The house was demolished in 1937. In 1935 Northchurch itself was added to the Urban District. Council housing was later built at Gossoms End. Development on the north side of the railway was prevented until the sale of the Ashridge estate in the 1930s; some housing appeared at each end of Bridgewater Road, which was a footpath across the grounds of Berkhamsted Place, and a few houses on the drive to the Place itself (OS 6" map, 1937-9 with additions to 1947).

### ***Other 20<sup>th</sup> century Listed Buildings***

*The Rex Cinema, High Street* (HER 11466): built in 1938 in brick, the white façade embellished with faience and what may be painted stone, and designed by David Nye. The Rex is particularly notable for its surviving Art Deco interiors, which survived partitioning of the auditorium in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century and closure in 1988. It has recently been restored for its original purpose, and the partitions removed. The cinema was built on the site of a large 16<sup>th</sup> century building called Egerton House (Birtchnell 1975, xvi, 34).

There is also a Listed K6 telephone box of 1935 outside the medieval building no.129 High Street.

*The Mansion, Berkhamsted Hill*: a large house in Queen Anne style, built for the archaeologist Sir John Evans in 1906-8, and originally known as Britwell. The architect was George Hubbard; the builders were a local firm, H & J Matthews. The house is in English bond purple brick with red brick dressings, under a hipped tile roof with a large timber eaves cornice. The intention was clearly to make the house look old, the long wings flanking the central block suggesting separate building phases, and a sundial dated

1649 on the left wing. Inside are genuine (late 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century) re-used panelling, fireplaces and plaster ceilings.

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