

Appendix F - Archaeological Heritage of Wheathampstead

The Upper Lea Valley around Wheathampstead has been settled and farmed since the late Iron Age and probably much earlier. There are over 225 sites listed in the Hertfordshire Historical Environment Register (HHER). The following sites are arguably the most significant but there are many more.

Prehistory

- Multiple finds of worked flints from the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic, suggesting seasonal occupation. (HHER 0430).
- Neolithic farming (HHER 6511) – flint finds on the bypass.
- Cropmarks of a long barrow (HHER 7959) – possibly a major ritual site.
- Cropmarks of a henge monument at Amwell (HHER 6008)
- Many cropmarks of Bronze Age ring ditches (HHER 2238, 2798, 7918, 7956, 9061, 9761).
- Pottery, burnt flint and loom weights at Aldwickbury golf course dating to the Bronze Age and early Iron Age (HHER 10492).

Iron Age

There is little evidence of Early Iron Age sites but these often left few remains. However, around 100 BCE in the Late Iron Age, there is a profusion of important sites in the South East including an earthwork enclosure at Wheathampstead between the Devil's Dyke and the Slad (HHER 008). It has been suggested that this is where Julius Caesar defeated the British leader Cassivellaunus in 54 BCE. However, there is no evidence to support this theory.

Roman

There is substantial evidence of local activity during the Roman period.

- Excavations along the route of the bypass in the 1970s (HHER 2005) -substantial amounts of 1st century pottery found.
- Wick Avenue (HHER 1596) - Samian pottery found.
- The Hill (HHER 1597) - a tessellated floor was found in the 1930s in a garden.
- Turnershall Farm – a villa site that included a small bathhouse and the high-status burial of two women (HHER 9913).
- Piggottshill Wood, Aldwickbury (HHER 10539) - ditches containing early Roman pottery.
- Castle Farm (HHER 10538) - remains of three ovens.
- Roman building, Amwell (HHER 12142) - possibly a farmstead with cropmarks of a ditch system.

- A section of Roman road excavated at Gustard Wood (HHER 9540).
- A Roman road that connected Verulamium to Braughing (then an important town) was excavated at Coleman Green (HHER 4615 and 9603).
- Late Roman coin hoard found on the border between Wheathampstead and Sandridge (HHER 18314) close to the 'Wicked Lady' restaurant.

Saxon

The origin of the modern village centre is Saxon and probably dates to the early 7th century. The manor later grew into a royal estate.

- High-status Saxon 'pagan' burial to the north of Wheathampstead village centre (HHER 1637) - a bronze ewer is in the British Museum.
- Saxon cemetery partially excavated at Batford on the border with Harpenden.
- Late Saxon burials (8) at St. Helen's church (HHER 9730).
- Four mill sites (assumed to be water mills) are mentioned in the Domesday Book but the sites are unknown.

Later Medieval

- Parish church of St. Helen's (HHER 2877) – the present structure is mainly 13th century but parts of it could date to an earlier Saxon church.
- Old Rectory (HHER 9876) is probably the oldest non-ecclesiastical building in the village; parts of it may date back to the 14th century.
- Bury Farm Cottages, Bury Green (HHER9197) - possibly 15th century and originally forming the southern range of Wheathampsteadbury, the home farm of the manor.
- A medieval property line forms the rear of the properties on the east side of the High Street. They resemble burgage plots, suggesting that the centre of the village was small.

Early modern

The majority of old buildings in the High Street date to the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. These include:

- **16th century** - Wheathampstead Place, The Old Bakery, Bridge Mill (HHER 5820), 23 High Street, White Cottage, The Maltings, Lattimores, The Swan.
- **17th century** - The Bull Inn, 27 High Street, 8-10 High Street.
- **18th century** - Jessamine Cottage, 29 High Street.

Source: *Isobel Thompson - 'Wheathampstead & Harpenden - Extensive Urban Survey programme' - Herts County Council - 2002*