

Re-Connecting Berkhamsted Castle

Berkhamsted Castle Trust is working with LUC to undertake a feasibility study on surrounding land that once formed a medieval park



Project background

The study is funded by the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund and by a grant from The Marchus Trust, and seeks to establish the potential for creating a park with a shared vision to celebrate the rich historic and cultural heritage of the landscape linked to Berkhamsted Castle.

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government's Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025. The Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills. For more information, visit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-shared-prosperity-fund-prospectus>

We want to hear your views and ideas!

The purpose of this consultation is to get your opinion on the emerging future opportunities at and surrounding Berkhamsted Castle.

Fill in the questionnaire here:



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/BerkhamstedCastle>

Have your say by 5pm Friday 24th May

Timescales



Berkhamsted Castle Trust

Berkhamsted Castle Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and provides education about, promotes and maintains Berkhamsted Castle. It fosters use and enjoyment of the castle by the public, and undertakes historical research or archaeological investigation into the castle.

LUC

LUC is an award-winning multi-disciplinary environmental consultancy with over 55 years' experience of delivering locally distinct and responsive design solutions. Previous projects include the restoration and public opening of Lowther Castle, and the gateway project at Ashridge Estate.



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*"Researching the past, protecting in the present,
educating for the future."*

Registered charity (England & Wales) number 1176286



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The key objectives for the project are:



Protection
Raising the profile of Berkhamsted Castle and securing its future



Public access
Providing additional and alternative publicly accessible green space in Berkhamsted whilst steering movement away from the Special Area of Conservation at Ashridge Estate



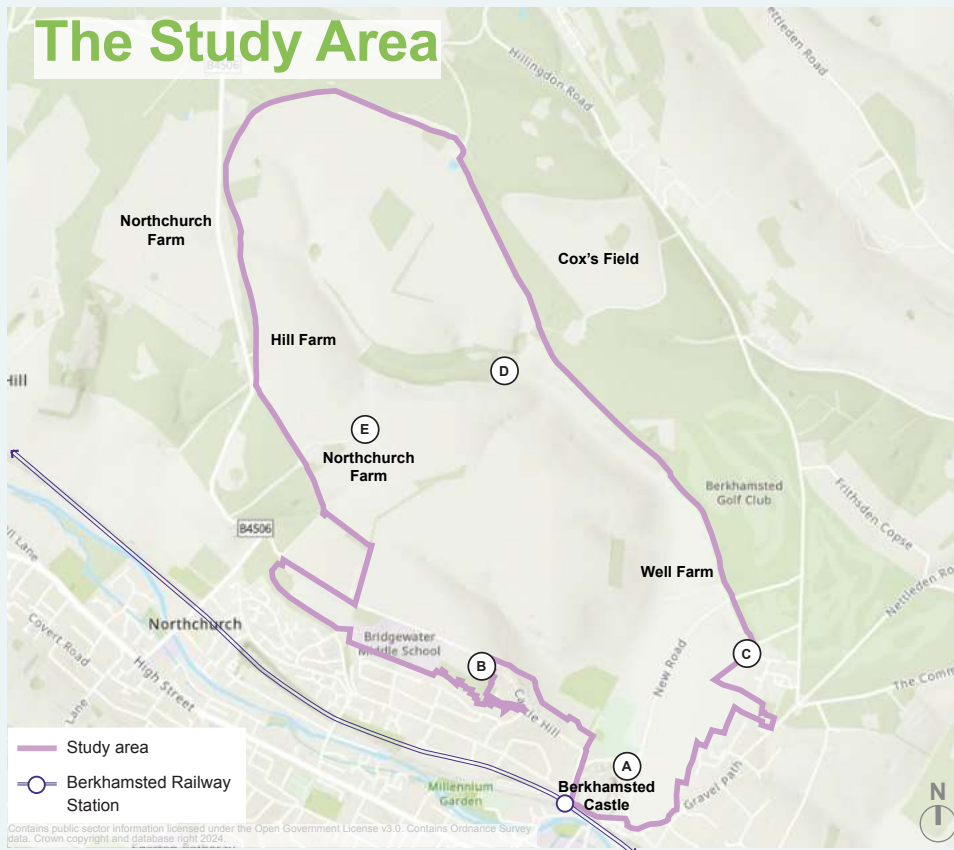
Outdoor provision
Rationalising and improving access, signage and existing furniture



Education
Promoting the site's history including its use as a former deer park



Engagement
Working with land owners, key stakeholders and members of the public to understand the feasibility of the park



View looking north west from the castle



View looking south east near Berkhamsted Place



View looking south west towards Berkhamsted



View looking south east over chalk grassland



View looking north east into the study area



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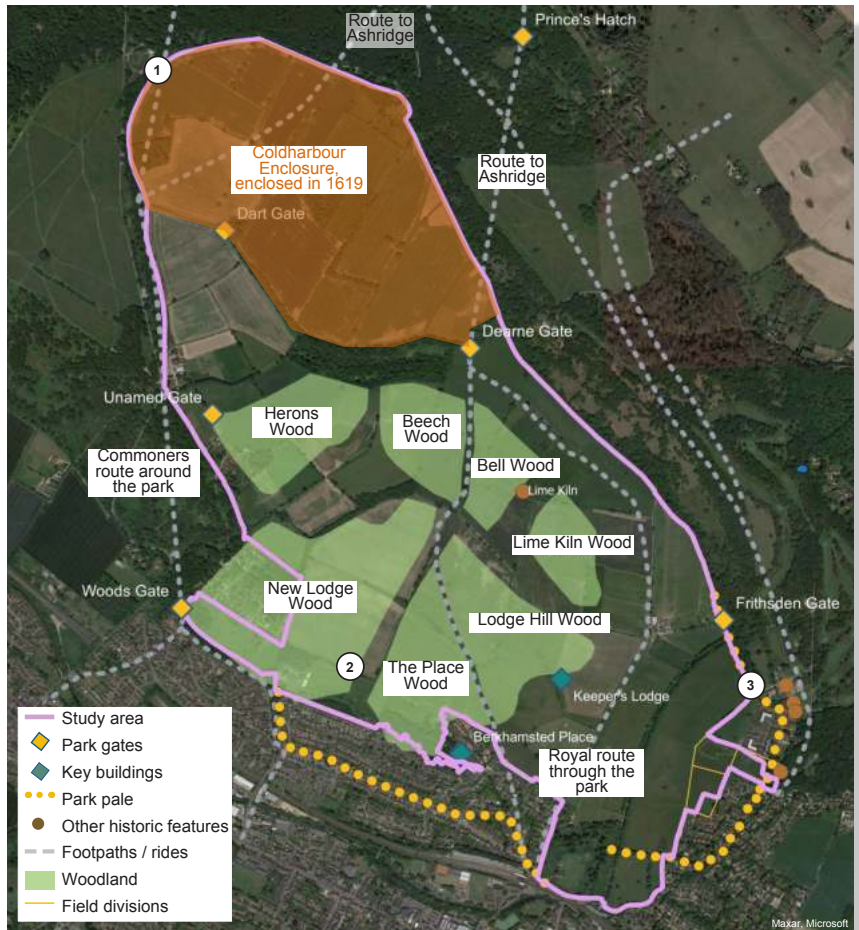


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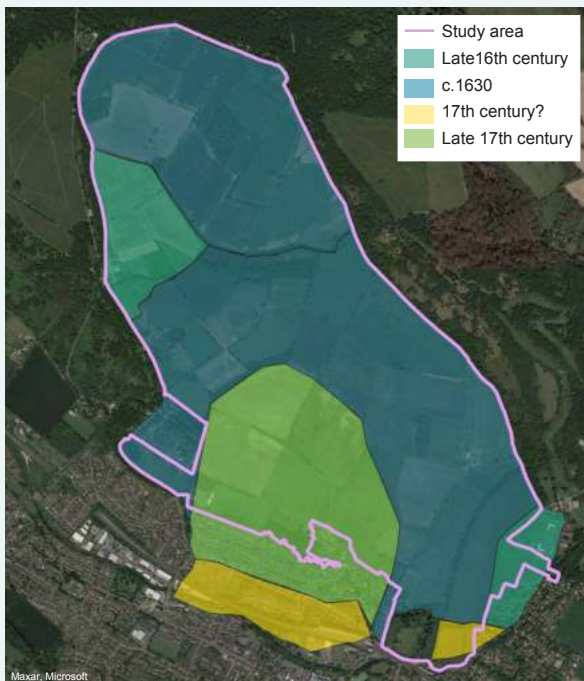
Historic development

Timeline

- c.1066** Berkhamsted Castle built by Robert of Mortain.
- c.1280** The Earl of Cornwall encloses former common land to create a new deer park.
- 1337** Edward of Woodstock, the Black Prince, expands the deer park.
- 1495** Castle abandoned after the death of the Duchess of York. Deerpark retained for hunting and as a resource for timber.
- 1580** Sir Edward Carey leases the park from Elizabeth I for the price of a rose. He builds Berkhamsted Place at Castle Hill, using stone from the castle.
- 1612** Charles Stuart, later Charles I encloses an area north of the park, known as the Coldharbour Enclosure. This is met with fierce opposition from local people who held commoner's rights to the land. Park reaches its full size at just over 522ha.
- 1628** Charles turns most of the park over to farming, leaving just 151ha of the inner park.
- 1862** Duchy sells the Berkhamsted estate (except the castle) to Lord Brownlow for the sum of £144,546. Brownlow also owns Ashridge by this period. He rents the castle from the Duchy and uses the bailey to host local events.
- 1914-19** The Inns of Court Officers' Training Corps establish a training camp at Berkhamsted. Practice trenches were dug to the south of what is now the cricket club.
- 1921** On the death of the 3rd Lord Brownlow the estate is sold off. The former parkland is divided into lots and sold to individual owners, although the castle remains part of the Duchy Estates.
- 1929** Berkhamsted Castle passes into the guardianship of the state.
- 2017** Berkhamsted Castle Trust set up to promote and engage people in the history and protection of the castle and parkland. Works alongside English Heritage as custodians of the site.



Above: Features transcribed from Norden's 1612 map on modern aerial



Above: Modern aerial with the phases of disemparkment

Why is Berkhamsted deer park important?

Berkhamsted Castle deer park was a critical part of the historic landscape for nearly 400 years until it was disemparked in the late 17th century. Its distinctive layout is still preserved today in the line of field boundaries to the north of the town. Although intrinsically linked with the castle, the deer park was so much more than a playground for the rich, it was a carefully managed sustainable resource providing timber, meat, fuel, and revenue to the royal household.

What is a deer park?

A deer park was a hunting ground, timber source and status symbol of wealthy aristocrats who had the privilege to enclose land for private use. The park was a carefully managed landscape and was surrounded by a 'park pale'; a sizeable fence to keep deer in and poachers out. Deer parks were a prominent feature of the British landscape until they were either broken up and converted into agricultural land or incorporated into post-medieval country estates.



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Ideas and aspirations...have your say



Berkhamsted Castle Trust would like to better understand potential opportunities to bring out the story of the landscape.

It is recognised that some ideas will be aspirational given that the landscape beyond the immediate surroundings of Berkhamsted Castle has multiple owners, site considerations and constraints.

Examples of potential opportunities



Potential historic site or point of interest



Potential enhanced arrival experience



Potential viewpoint interpretation



Potential consolidated and improved wayfinding

Similar examples from elsewhere



Dartington Hall, South Devon



Sowerby Park and Sports Village - North Yorkshire



Bucklers Forest - Crowthorne



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