



## News and events

- Twenty people completed our 'Short walk around Saxon Wheathampstead' on 25th October. Walk leader Mike Smith said that, although the Saxon village may have been small, there was no shortage of clues to suggest what it may have looked like.
- **Next meeting:** Wednesday 17 November. Jon Mein will talk about 'The Red Lion – a five hundred year story of a St Albans inn'.

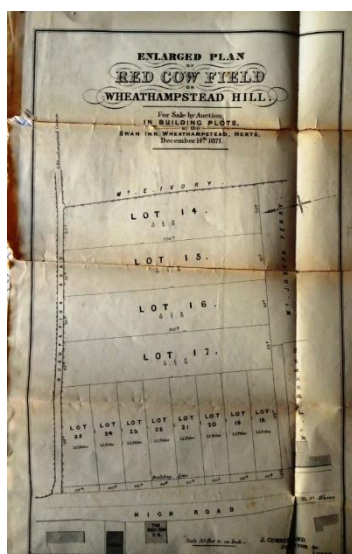
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## The Hill

A recent application to build a terrace of three houses at the top of the east side of The Hill is the latest development in the long history of building in this part of Wheathampstead.

On the east side, Town Farm (demolished in 1971) was built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century on the corner of what is now Marford Road. The next few houses going up The Hill (including Dolphins, The Laurels, Four Limes) date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. No. 76 on the west side, formerly two cottages and now one house, has a 17<sup>th</sup> century timber frame. The Yeoman map of 1758 shows only the west side of The Hill and includes The Red Cow pub (now no. 50).

The 1840 Tithe Map shows open fields on the east side all the way to the King William (now The Wicked Lady) except for two cottages which seem to have been demolished. Fieldnames included Great Common, Red Cow Field and Little Red Cow Field. The 1851 census shows just nine households between Town Farm and the King William.



The arrival of the railway in Wheathampstead in 1860 transformed the local economy, making the area more attractive as a place to live and work. Red Cow Field was owned by John Isaac House and, when he died in 1870, the field became a prime candidate for development. An advertisement in the

Herts Advertiser on 29 July 1871 stated

that 'Red Cow Field on Wheathampstead Hill will be divided into Building and Accommodation Blocks'. The auction was held in December 1871 and the brochure included the map on the left, showing the land to be sold on the east side opposite The Red Cow. A visit to the site today shows that, while some of the original plots are still intact, others have been merged and modified.

Eight years later, on 27 June 1879, seven acres of 'Freehold Arable Land', described in the auction brochure as 'a most eligible site for a good residence or for a public institution' were sold by auction at The Swan for £770. It seems likely that this was the land on the west side behind The Red Cow, then known as 'Great Red Cow Field'. The advertisement for the auction emphasised that Wheathampstead was 'On Hertford, Luton, and Dunstable Branch of the Great Northern Railway'.

The development of the area continued apace. In 1897 an advertisement for sale by private treaty of the 'Red Cow Meadow Estate' described it as the 'first portion of this exceptionally well-placed Freehold Building Land in plots with frontages to the High Road ... well adapted for the erection of a superior class of cottages for which there is a special demand'. The advertisement is headed 'On the Great Northern Railway, within easy reach of London'.

By 1911, with much infilling, the houses and cottages on The Hill between Town Farm and the King William accommodated 46 households.

The application to build a three-house terrace behind nos. 97-105 The Hill is at <https://planningapplications.stalbans.gov.uk/planning> reference 5/2021/5621.