

CHESHIRE HISTORIC TOWNS SURVEY

Warrington

Archaeological Strategy



2003

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Front cover :

John Speed's Map of Lancashire 1610

Lancashire County Council <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/oldmap/index.asp>

Warrington: Area of Archaeological Potential

1. Introduction

1.1 An Area of Archaeological Potential (AAP) has been identified in Warrington comprising five Archaeological Character Zones (ACZs). Each Zone is identified by its defining archaeological or historical characteristics, or *Primary Characteristics*. For example, in the Later Medieval Zone (Archaeological Character Zone 1), the defining characteristics include blocks of medieval burgage plots and the Augustinian Friary.

1.2 Each Archaeological Character Zone may also include sites and features which are not defining characteristics but are nonetheless of archaeological and historical importance, and these are identified as *Secondary Characteristics*. For example, Archaeological Character Zone 1 includes evidence of Roman activity as well as post medieval redevelopment, and these have therefore been identified as Secondary Characteristics.

1.3 The list of characteristics is not exhaustive, and it is possible that other types of important archaeological remains and features exist within each Archaeological Character Zone. The boundaries of the AAP and the Archaeological Character Zones, and the list of Primary and Secondary Characteristics are intended as a guide for planners and developers. They are based on current knowledge, and are therefore subject to change as new information is revealed.

2. Existing Designations (Figure 1)

Scheduled Ancient Monuments	Four: the Bank Quay Transporter Bridge (SAM 108); Roman Remains behind Wilderspool Brewery (SAM 110); Bewsey Old Hall (SAM 13483) and Barrow Old Hall (SAM 13434).
Listed Buildings	Grade I – The Town Hall Grade II* - Nine Grade II - 208
Conservation Areas	Six – Bewsey Street, Bridge Street, Buttermarket Street, Church Street, Palmyra Street and the Town Hall.

3. The Archaeological Character Zones (Figure 2)

Zone 1: Roman Wilderspool

Primary Characteristics	
Settlement	Three main areas of activity have been identified in Wilderspool: on the site and in the vicinity of the Wilderspool Brewery, Stockton Heath and Loushers Lane, dating from c 1st century to the 4th century.
Industry	The primary function of the Roman settlement at Wilderspool was to supply the Roman army in the north of Britain. A variety of industrial processes have been identified including iron smelting and smithing, copper, bronze and lead working, glass and pottery making.
Roman Roads	A network of roads converged upon Wilderspool, including King Street, which connected Wilderspool with Middlewich to the south.
Cemetery	Roman cremations and burials, including a lead coffin, have been discovered in the vicinity of the Wilderspool Swing Bridge.

Zone 2: Norman Warrington

Primary Characteristics	
St Elphin's Church	St Elphin's church was recorded at Domesday, which indicates an origin of either early medieval or Conquest date.
Motte and Bailey Castle	Nothing of the 12th century castle survives above ground. Mote Hill was the subject of a number of excavations in the 19th century prior to its destruction.
Tenements	Settlement is likely to have developed in the vicinity of the church and the castle and potentially planned medieval tenements have been identified

	along Church Street.
Market Places	A market is likely to have been held in the vicinity of the church and castle, however a planned market place has potentially been identified at the west end of Church Street.

Secondary Characteristics	
Medieval and Post Medieval St Elphin's Church	The earliest fabric of the church is 14th century in date, while most of the church dates to the 19th century renovations.
Early Medieval Estate Centre?	Warrington was the focus of an important early medieval estate. This early settlement was potentially located within the immediate vicinity of St Elphin's church.
Boteler Grammar School	The Boteler Grammar School was founded in 1526 on what later became School Lane.
St Elphin's Rectory	The rectory was a moated site, which was occupied from the 14th to the late 18th century. In 1832 the moat was in-filled and a new house was built on the site.
Post Medieval Redevelopment	This Zone underwent domestic and industrial redevelopment during the post medieval period.

Zone 3: Late Medieval Warrington

Primary Characteristics	
Medieval Settlement	It is suggested that at some time in the 13th century the Lord of Warrington, William de Boteler, laid out a new town to the west of the earlier settlement and in 1292 he granted Warrington Borough status.

Warrington Bridge	Warrington Bridge was probably constructed in the 13th century when the new Borough was created by William de Boteler. It was rebuilt in 1394 and repaired in 1420, but by 1453 the bridge had fallen and it was not repaired until 1495 when it was rebuilt in stone.
Market Places	A large rectangular market place was established c 1260 where Bridge Street crossed the old street to Prescott, the main east-west route along the Mersey valley. Other specialist markets were no doubt also held in Warrington.
Augustinian Friary	A house of Augustinian Friars was founded at Friar's Gate, close to Warrington Bridge by William Fitzalmeric le Boteler before 1272. The friary was suppressed in 1539 but the church remained in use until c 1650. Nothing of the friary survives above ground.

Secondary Characteristics	
Roman Activity	Archaeological deposits have been recorded in the vicinity of the friary, which indicate that there was Romano-British activity in this area. The nature and extent of this activity remains to be defined.
Post Medieval Settlement	Re-development of the medieval town occurred during the post medieval period. There are a large number of listed buildings in Warrington, the majority of which are of 18th and 19th century date - for example, the Old Academy on Bridge Street, which was built in 1757 or earlier to train candidates for the Nonconformist ministry (Grade II).
Industrial Development	A number of industrial sites are located within this Zone, including roperies, flour mills, tanneries, dye houses and pin manufactories.

Zone 4: Bank Quay Industrial Centre

Primary Characteristics	
Industrial Sites	Bank Quay developed as an industrial area to the west of Warrington. It was founded in the late 17th century by Thomas Patten.

Zone 5: Post Medieval Expansion

Primary Characteristics	
Industrial Sites	Warrington underwent large scale industrial development in the post medieval period. A broad variety of industries and manufactories, including roperies, foundries, tanneries etc were located in the town, aided by the canal and train network.
Domestic Expansion	Industrial growth stimulated domestic expansion and a large number of terraced houses are located throughout this Zone.



Figure 1: Warrington Existing Designations

- Scheduled Ancient Monument
- Listed Building
- Conservation Area

1:40000

0 1 2 Kilometres

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Figure 2: Warrington Area of Archaeological Potential and Archaeological Character Zones

-  Area of Archaeological Potential
-  ACZ 1: Roman Wilderspool
-  ACZ 2: Norman Warrington
-  ACZ 3: Later Medieval Warrington
-  ACZ 4: Bank Quay Industrial Centre
-  ACZ 5: Post Medieval Expansion
-  Area Outside the Historic Core

1:14000

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