[Welwyn]

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Aim of the Report

This report has been produced as one of a series of 25 archaeological surveys of historic urban areas in Hertfordshire as part of the English Heritage Extensive Urban Survey Programme. All the places surveyed were either urban districts by 1900, or had urban characteristics in the past. The project is being carried out by Hertfordshire County Council's Archaeology Section in conjunction with English Heritage, who are also funding the project.

The aim of the report is to provide a framework from which decisions can be made about the management of the archaeological resource of Wheathampstead and Harpenden. The report is divided into three parts:

1. A summary of what is known of the archaeological and historical development of the two centres using the evidence from archaeology, buildings, old maps and documents, and surviving physical elements of the historic townscapes such as ancient property boundaries. The evidence is presented as a series of thematic and period maps generated by GIS, accompanied by a brief explanatory text.

2. An assessment of priorities for the management of the archaeological resource of the two centres, including academic research priorities.

3. A strategy which aims to take forward the research and management priorities.

1.2 The Sources Used

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

- The Hertfordshire County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)
- 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 SMR

In addition, numerous articles, both published and unpublished, have been used; a bibliography is included at the end of the report.

1.3 Geography

Welwyn lies in the valley of the river Mimram, where the river, having run south from its source in the Chilterns, makes a turn to the east between two hills, and then to the south-east towards its confluence with the river Lea at Hertford. 'Welwyn' in

Old English means 'at the willows', presumably referring to trees along the riverbanks (Gover, Mawer, & Stenton 1938, 144). The present course of the river is at least in part artificial, as attempts have been made in historic periods to control the flow and prevent flooding. The town was until the 20th century confined to a compact area below and on the slopes of the higher ground, around the crossing of the river by a succession of roads with more or less historic importance as long-distance routes. It is now overshadowed by its much larger neighbour to the south, Welwyn Garden City. It has also been bypassed by the A1(M) motorway.

2.0 AN OUTLINE OF THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SETTLEMENT

2.1 Prehistory: Palaeolithic to Iron Age (c10,000 BC to 100 BC) (Figure 1)

Stone tools dating from the earliest human activity in the area are not uncommon, although they are scattered. ***Palaeolithic*** stone tools are the most frequently found. Along the river handaxes and other tools have been recorded in alluvial deposits near the Fulling Mill (SMR 2734), at various places along the valley and near Welwyn mill downstream (SMR 2782, 2915, 10392), and at Digswell (SMR 0640). Other handaxes and tools have been found in clay over a boulder clay terrace at Harmer Green (SMR 0635, ?4162) and at the Clock (SMR 1781), and a series found during the cutting of the Welwyn Tunnel in 1850 (SMR 2733). ***Mesolithic*** flints are not so frequent, but some have been noted near the Fulling Mill (SMR 2734), and there are others in the British Museum from 'Welwyn' (SMR 0636) which are probably also from the river valley. At this early date in Hertfordshire Mesolithic groups were exploiting the resources along the margins of many of the rivers, and the Mimram is unlikely to have been ignored. Further finds may be expected. There is as yet no sign of any ***Neolithic*** settlement in Welwyn, although arrowheads are reported from the Danesbury estate (SMR 6184). Other worked stone tools of the period have been found to the east and south-east at Harmer Green (SMR 2829), Digswell (SMR 0641) and 'Welwyn Garden City' (SMR 2242), but nothing substantial has been recorded.

A good deal more evidence is available from the ***Bronze Age***, indicating that it was in this period that settlement in the Welwyn area became well established. Even so, the finds are scattered and do not relate directly to the area of the town itself. The modern quarry pit now called Digswell Water, further downstream, produced axeheads, a spearhead, and a cremation urn (SMR 4771, 0644), implying nearby settlement. Many flints of the period are said to have been found in the area of Welwyn North station, which is just north of Digswell Water, and also at Oakhills (SMR 0638). Flints and a tanged arrowhead were recorded during the excavation of the Dicket Mead Roman villa, near the river between Digswell and Welwyn (SMR 4164). In the 19th century a founder's hoard of socketed axes and lumps of copper was discovered somewhere in the grounds of Danesbury (SMR 0639). Cropmarks of ring ditches, many of which are likely to be Bronze Age round barrows or burial mounds, have been recorded in association with a field system west of Woolmer Green (SMR 7687-9), and another possible round barrow as well as an enclosure (of unknown date) are known at Digswell (SMR 7932-3).

All these sites appear to relate to the period before c800 BC. There follows a gap in the material record of perhaps 600-700 years, although it is unlikely that the area was deserted. Remains of the early ***Iron Age*** are notoriously hard to identify in Hertfordshire, and it is nearer the end of the 1st millennium BC that material evidence reappears. At Welwyn a small amount of Middle Iron Age pottery has been identified, in a ditch at the Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital (SMR 9267). This site was also occupied by a Late Iron Age enclosure, and will be further discussed below. It appears, however, that the start of a long sequence of settlement at Welwyn began perhaps in the 2nd century BC on the higher ground south-west of the river crossing.

2.2 Late Iron Age and Roman (cBC 50 to cAD 450) (Figure 2)

Late Iron Age

Late Iron Age and Roman remains in Hertfordshire are particularly abundant, and as they overlap the two periods are considered together. In the Welwyn area Late Iron Age occupation begins in the 1st century BC with a number of scattered settlements, each presumably a single farmstead. Many of them are known on the higher ground now occupied by the Garden City, outside Welwyn parish, and are not considered here; another is at Linces Farm, just outside the parish boundary west of Welwyn (SMR 0000). Ditches of a farmstead were recorded at the Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital (SMR 9267), and traces of another on the site of the Lockleys Roman villa (SMR 1566; Ward Perkins 1938). A pit containing pottery and a knife is known to the north-west at Reynards Road (SMR 0156). Pottery from Welches Farm (SMR 2739), north-east of Welwyn, may be from a higher-status settlement as the site is bordered by the substantial bank and ditch called Perry's Grove (SMR 2741). This is undated but may be Late Iron Age. The contemporary cremation burials indicate that Welwyn was of much greater importance than the settlement evidence has so far revealed: the imported grave goods (amphorae and silver and bronze vessels from Italy, fine pottery from Gaul) of the 'chieftain graves' found at Prospect Place in 1906 (SMR 0158), and the Mardleybury amphora burial (SMR 0411), indicate wealth and connections with the Roman world. These and the Welwyn Garden City burial are the richest in Hertfordshire, and imply the presence in the area of powerful local chieftains. Other burials which may be of this period are SMR 1791, two urns and a bronze brooch found in a Welwyn chalk pit in 1742; and SMR 2807, five burial urns found at the Frythe. Both of these discoveries could have been either Late Iron Age or Roman; the finds have been lost.

The overall impression conveyed by the known sites is that of single farmsteads scattered over the landscape, and indicating widespread settlement on the higher ground. No high-status occupation site has yet been identified with any certainty, although the burials show that one such must have existed from the late 1st century BC. Presumably there was also a road linking the major Late Iron Age settlements at St Albans and Braughing, and beyond, the predecessor of the Roman Stane Street. It would not necessarily have crossed the river Mimram in the same place as the Roman highway.

The Roman road

Soon after the Roman conquest in AD 43 Welwyn emerges as a distinct place, centred on the crossing of the river by the newly engineered road from Verulamium (St Albans) to Braughing and Colchester. This was one of the main highways of Roman Hertfordshire. It has fallen out of use only in part, and its line has never been lost. Its exact course through Welwyn has been established by several sightings of the road surface and its flanking ditches (SMR 7310-11, 9604-5). These show that the road (including the ditches) was no less than 30m wide, and forded the river without any deviation from its straight north-eastern course. This took the easiest line through the contours of the higher ground. It curved towards the east at Oaklands, where it has been recorded (SMR 7673) in an aerial photograph close to where it re-emerges as a lane still in use at Datchworth.

Roman Welwyn was centred on this road. Around it, as the map shows, the settlement was small and compact, with no sign of straggling roadside development. The cemeteries, always along the roads outside, define settlement limits. Here a small cemetery (SMR 2303) lay south-west of the river crossing, another (SMR 1790) was an apparent successor to the Prospect Place Late Iron Age burials, and a third cemetery, a large one, spread across the higher ground north of the river crossing. Housing was in the School Lane-Manor House area (SMR 1556 etc). To the east, in the valley and across the river, was a large and prosperous villa estate. On the outskirts was an industrial area. The absence of roadside ribbon development, and the apparently well-organised layout, suggest an element of planning in the settlement. Despite the great numbers of people buried in the Grange cemetery, Roman Welwyn is not large enough to be described as a 'small town' (Brown 1995). It is likely to have been an estate village, owned and controlled by the villa. Unlike many settlements on villa estates elsewhere, however, this one was on the highway. Goods and produce to and from the villa itself would use the road as well as the river, roadside facilities could be provided for travellers, and it is possible that tolls were charged at the river crossing. The precise course of the river through Welwyn in the Roman period is unknown; the channel at Dicket Mead (below) was artificial but may have taken the entire flow.

The villa

Two sites are known: Lockleys (SMR 1566) and Dicket Mead (SMR 1913). The Lockleys site consists of a masonry building on the slope above the river, briefly excavated in 1937 (Ward Perkins 1938). It stood on the site of one of the Late Iron Age ditched farmsteads of the area, and appears to represent the evolvement of a Late Iron Age farm into a Roman estate. This building was burnt down in the mid 4th century. The dating and building sequence are not clearly understood, and nothing is known of its surrounding context, which has not been excavated and remains under cultivation. Building materials have been ploughed up near Lockleys Warren (SMR 6186; Rook 1983-6, 108, no.24). The Dicket Mead complex (Rook 1983-6) was in the valley bottom directly below Lockleys, and aerial photographs show how the river had been canalised between two of the three main Dicket Mead structures, running beneath arches through a connecting wall and past a smaller fourth building. This site was more extensively excavated but in advance of motorway construction, and while it provided much information it has now been largely destroyed. The complex, with baths, hypocaust heating, painted walls and window glass, appears to have been built

on open ground in the early 3rd century and was gradually abandoned in the mid to late 4th century. It seems unlikely that Lockleys and Dicket Mead could be two villas in different ownership, and double villas are known elsewhere in Hertfordshire (Niblett 1995, 87). Whatever the fine detail of the building sequence may have been they should represent the main buildings on a single wealthy estate. This may have had several sources of income, in addition to agriculture and putative tolls. The canal shows utilisation of the river for some purpose, possibly milling as well as transport, while nearer the highway is evidence for large-scale grain processing (below). Marble fragments at both Dicket Mead and from the mausoleum at Welwyn Hall suggest the presence of Greek craftsmen at Welwyn, finishing imported sculptures and sarcophagi (S Walker, in Rook 1983-6, 163).

The cemeteries

The extent of the two cemeteries in School Lane (SMR 2303) and Prospect Place (SMR 1790) is unknown. The School Lane burials were 1st century and are likely to relate to the late Iron Age farmstead at the Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital (SMR 9267). One was an inhumation, which are found in late Iron Age or very early Roman cremation cemeteries in the region. 'A large number' of vessels was recovered from the roadworks in Prospect Place (Andrews 1911, 6-10), but they cannot now be isolated in the Hertford Museum collections and it is impossible to estimate how many burials there were, or their date range. From the report of samian ware, bracelets and brooches found with them, they were fairly wealthy cremation burials of the 1st and 2nd centuries. Their position so close to the 'chieftain' burials implies continuous use of a late Iron Age cemetery into the Roman period.

The cemetery usually referred to as Welwyn Grange, on the higher ground north of the river, was on a very different scale. Although it was never properly recorded, there were hundreds and possibly thousands of graves here (Andrews 1905, 30; Mayes 1908-9; Kindersley 1922; Westell 1930; Holmes 1951; Rook 1973). So many are known that it is interesting to speculate where all these people came from; possibly from further afield than the little settlement itself. The first pots were found c1890, when the slope in the grounds of The Grange was terraced and a tennis court constructed. From 1908 to 1939 various occupiers of the house salvaged hundreds of vessels; few groups were recorded. 400 pots representing nearly 100 burial groups were excavated in 1967 when a cutting was made for the link road from Singlers Bridge to the by-pass. Several glass vessels were found, but the graves were not rich and only a very few had any goods other than domestic pottery, often damaged. None of the finds were pre-Roman, but the cemetery was used continuously until the change of burial rite to inhumation in the 3rd century. Signs of some 3rd-4th century inhumations were present, although the main inhumation area lay beyond the part used for the cremations. This was evidently the main cemetery for Welwyn throughout the Roman period, and it is likely that the burials found at The Hall are part of it. 20 inhumations were found around a substantial square masonry foundation that appears to have belonged to a 3rd century mausoleum (Rook, Walker & Denston 1984; McDonald 1995). This would have been a tall and striking building on high ground overlooking the village, the road, the river, and the villa. Fragments of Greek marble from the site represented a very expensive sarcophagus with figural sculpture on its surfaces, relating the structure to the Dicket Mead villa. Three more inhumations lay in the boundary ditch. All the inhumations were later than the

structure itself, with 4th century pottery and other grave goods. The full extent of the cemetery is unknown, and although much of it has been destroyed it is not impossible that more graves, particularly inhumations, may be discovered.

The village
Finds to date place the settlement south-west of the river crossing. Nearly all are chance finds, but they do fall within a coherent area, and the known evidence is suggestive. Traces of actual structures are recorded only from the Manor House grounds, north-east of the late 18th century rectory (SMR 1556; Andrews 1911, 9; Rook 1983-6, 172-3, quoting Mayes). More than one building may have been seen, together with a good deal of debris. It is likely that more remains to be discovered here. Plaster and rubble from the destruction of another building were found in a timber-lined Roman well at no.9 The Green; another well, shallow pits, coins, and rubbish are known in the vicinity (SMR 6418; *Herts Archaeol* 1 (1968), 117-8; Rook 1983-6, 108, no.14). Pits containing pottery were found at 17 School Lane in 1958, including a late 1st century mortarium (SMR 1693; Rook 1983-6 108, no.13). A corn-drier was recorded in Elmore Avenue, with a scatter of pottery and two coins (SMR 6181; Rook 1983-6, 108, no.12). Pits containing 1st and 2nd century rubbish were noted all over the Manor House orchard, now the north end of Ellesfield, in 1973-4 (SMR 6501; Rook 1983-6, 108, no.10). This rubbish included pottery, building materials, slag, glass, and metalwork. Coins were found in the dark soil over the pits, and many others have been found in the grounds of the Manor House and elsewhere. The overall character of the Welwyn coins implies that they 'in all probability come from a small settlement, a large villa, or, less likely, a rural religious shrine' (R Reece in Rook 1983-6, 144-5). They cover the entire Roman period, and include a late 3rd century hoard from Glebe Road.

What went on on the east bank of the river is uncertain. Two coins were found in the grounds of Guessens in 1908-9 (SMR 1567; Andrews 1911, 7-8) and burnt flints with 'metallic clinkers' and some tile were seen nearby at the Grange in 1907-8 (SMR 1555; Mayes 1908, 118). The nature of the remains at the Grange is quite unknown, and the full extent of the residential area is as yet unclear. Finds on the allotments in Lockleys Drive appear to be debris redeposited on the riverbank (SMR 4964; Rook 1983-6, 108, no.18). Industrial processes were confined to the outskirts. A small furnace or kiln recorded at Broomfield Road in 1931 is at present isolated (SMR 1557; *Journal of Roman Studies* 1931, 206). Another corn drier, and evidence of large-scale industrial processing of some kind was seen along the line of the by-pass in 1960 and 1972. This consists of extensive spreads of daub or fired clay, as well as 2nd-3rd century rubbish. Adjacent shallow depressions filled with ash, daub and carbonised grain suggest some sort of grain-processing, presumably for the villa (SMR 1581, 1786; Rook 1983-6, 105-7).

2.3 Saxon and Medieval

Centralised Roman rule collapsed at the beginning of the 5th century, and before this date Dicket Mead villa had been abandoned and the signs of its prosperity had gone. The small settlement at Welwyn disappeared. The late Roman masonry buildings fell

into ruin; in due course the masonry was robbed out, although it is not known when, or for what purpose. The medieval village appears to represent a new start, after a gap of several centuries. Some evidence exists to show that this new start took place in mid to later Saxon times, and although the village itself seems to have been refounded it is unlikely that the area was ever deserted. The Roman road survived and was used, and the fact that its line has never been lost ought to mean a comparatively late date for its diversion into a wandering course across the river Mimram and through Welwyn. This may have been c1000 AD when the approach roads to St Albans were deliberately diverted by the abbey, and the straight course of the highway south of Welwyn was cut. The medieval parish church of Welwyn stands on the Roman road, so the road was diverted before the church was built.

Saxon Welwyn

Domesday Book records that in the later 11th century there were no less than 42 households at Welwyn, although it is unlikely that they formed a nucleated settlement. They were scattered amongst four main estates, one of which was held by a priest. This was the medieval Rectory manor, but the land had been granted by king Edward the Confessor. The Domesday entry indicates that the local population was comparatively large, and that there may already have been a church, or at least a churchyard. Unaccompanied inhumations are known from the area between The Grange and the north side of the medieval churchyard, indicating that the churchyard once stretched further northwards (SMR 10902; Rook 1970). It is possible that the discovery of bodies 'at the north end of this Town' reported to Chauncy (1700, 27) is the origin of the unfounded story that the Danes were massacred at Welwyn. If a Saxon church existed it would have been here, north of the medieval church and alongside the Roman highway, in a prime position above the river crossing. It is possible that the church tower which fell down in 1663 was a remnant of an earlier building, as it apparently stood on the north side of the medieval chancel, an odd position.

Two sherds of grass-tempered early to mid-Saxon pottery are recorded from the grounds of Holly Hall, south of the church (Ashworth & Hillelson 1997). Possible Saxo-Norman sherds were found on the site of the Roman mausoleum, and late Saxon coins have been recorded from the village. A probable hoard, deposited c978, was found during roadworks on the Great North Road in Welwyn in 1912 (SMR 2843; Dolley 1969). Another coin, minted c1050, was found in Welwyn in the 18th century (SMR 4165). These finds help to support the idea of a high-status late Saxon nucleus here on the road by the river crossing. Domesday also mentions the existence of two watermills at Welwyn. These are presumably Welwyn Mill itself (SMR 7040; see below), and the 'Fulling Mill' (SMR 5781) on the historic parish boundary with Codicote. They are almost certainly late Saxon in origin.

How early the Saxon nucleus of Welwyn can be dated is unknown. The grass-tempered sherds, probably late 6th-7th century, need not imply permanent settlement. The close proximity of the postulated late Saxon graveyard to the Roman cemetery and mausoleum/shrine may be no more than repeated use of the hillside above the river crossing, but some crumbling ancient remains might have been visible and the Christian enclosure may have been purposely sited. Davis (1982, 38, 110) suggests that Welwyn might have had a minster church serving a wide area from the late 7th

century, but the earliest documentary reference dates to the mid 10th century (VCH 1914, 289).

Medieval Welwyn

Despite its large 11th century population medieval Welwyn was no more than a village. It had no fair or market, although neighbouring Digswell and Codicote both had such facilities. The two main manors of Welwyn parish were the Rectory, with its manor house near the mill, and Mardley. This had its manor house at Mardleybury, remote from the village to the north-east. The manor of Lockleys emerged during the period in much greater proximity. Few extant property boundaries imply a possibly medieval origin, apart from that on the north side of the old rectory. The main surviving elements of medieval Welwyn are the parish church; the old rectory; and the mill.

The parish church of St Mary

The building (SMR 4327) has a chancel and four bays in the nave south arcade dating to the late 13th century, but nothing earlier, and most of its medieval character has been lost. Very little is known about its building history. In the 1870s Cussans (1874-8, 215-6) wrote of 'a Norman arch, discovered a few years ago, in the north wall of the chancel'. Chauncy (1700, 30) mentions the two aisles, and the tower on the north side of the chancel which fell down in a storm in 1663 and was never rebuilt. In 1834 a new tower was built at the west end, and a new north aisle, both in brick; it was noted when this tower was demolished in 1911 that the bricks were re-used Roman. The brick north aisle was rebuilt and the church 'thoroughly restored' in 1868-70, when medieval elements were retained but not necessarily in their original positions, as Cussans describes. In 1911 the church was given a new west tower, nave, clerestory, north aisle, south aisle wall, and south chancel chapel, all by Blomfield (Pevsner 1977, 393), and the east window was replaced after a fire in 1952. It is still possible that evidence of the medieval structure, including that before the late 13th century, exists below ground but not much remains standing.

The Rectory manor

The manor house (SMR 10840) was not next to the church, but in the valley bottom near the mill. The standing building is 16th century, but it was surrounded by a moat which would have been built around the medieval manor house. This was ruinous by 1518 (Smith 1993, 208). The moat (SMR 10855) is not now visible, but was mapped c1810 (Rook 1979). The island on which the manor house stood was c33m across. Presumably the water came from the adjacent river and millstream; parts of the river through Welwyn have been canalised, perhaps in attempts to control flooding as well as to supply the mill and the moat. One of the functions of this moat would be to keep the house dry.

The watermill

Welwyn mill (SMR 7040) was recorded in 1086, and the earliest reference to a named miller dates to 1290. In 1461 the mill was included in a list of the property belonging to the Rectory manor (VCH 1912, 166), and may have been a perquisite of the Rectory since before 1066; later it belonged to the manor of Lockleys. It appears always to have been a corn mill. The present Mill House is mostly of later 18th century red brick, one brick with the date 1754 on it, but it has a 17th and early 18th

century south wing. A barn and other structures at one time straddled the river, but these have gone and the mill pond has been drained. After the last miller died in 1912 the mill itself was demolished.

The village, still small, may have suffered a drop in population in the later 14th century, affected by climatic worsening and resulting agricultural troubles. In 1341, just before the Black Death, much arable land 'lay unploughed at Hatfield, Totteridge, Datchworth and Welwyn' (VCH 1914, 187). No figures are available for the impact of the Black Death on Welwyn (Munby 1977, 129), but it may have been at this period that the churchyard contracted (the present north-eastern arm is a 19th century extension). It is recorded that the Lockleys estate was neglected. The first mention of Lockleys manor is in 1303; by the end of the century the capital messuage was 'ruined' and its assets wasted, timber cut down, buildings and men depleted (VCH 1912, 167). In 1415 the estate was conveyed to Sir John Perient of Digswell, a wealthy newcomer who took both Digswell (which had once had a market, but only six households left by 1428: Ward 1953, 83-4) and Lockleys in hand. The site of the ruined medieval Lockleys manor house is unknown, although a large pit (SMR 9613; Murray 1994) containing 12th-13th century pottery is recorded on the riverbank close to the later mansion, and it is possible that the 1717 house incorporates part of an ealier one (see below). The medieval road to Hertford (which connected with Church Street, not Prospect Place) crossed the grounds of Lockleys close to the later house (Branch Johnson 1960, 24). Other later medieval estates around the village included The Frythe, leased by the Wilshere family from Holywell Priory, Shoreditch, from the 14th century and bought by them in 1546 (Palmer 1977). These estates, remaining intact into the post-medieval period, prevented expansion of the village until the 20th century.

In the village itself, only sparse documentary records supply any detail. There is no sign of planned settlement; the village built up gradually along the High Street between the river and the church, and along Church Street. By 1287 a record of a 'Thomas at Brig' implies that a bridge across the river Mimram was already in place Branch Johnson 1960, 24). In common with many medieval bridges this may have been a footbridge only. There was at least one inn in the High Street. This was the Swan, first mentioned in court rolls in 1352 (Branch Johnson 1967, 26-33). Its name was changed to the Wellington in 1816 (see below). Guessens, at the start of the road to Codicote, was a farm recorded from the 14th century (Branch Johnson 1967, 35), and next door was a house on the site of Ivy Cottage from 1425, while the first recorded building on the site of Holly Hall, opposite the church, was built in 1430 (Branch Johnson 1960, 22). In 1443 John Thebregge was granted a licence to build a forge (SMR 10860; *ibid*) on the east side of the High Street, at the corner of what is now Mimram Walk. Clearly by this date the village was recovering.

2.4 Post-medieval development

The Dissolution of the monasteries in the 16th century had little direct effect on Welwyn, as none of it was under the direct control of a monastic establishment and no break-up of property took place. The factor with greatest influence on the present

settlement was the gradual emergence of another major highway through the village, and thereafter the many changes in the road system.

The Great North Road
This emerged in the 16th century to provide a reasonable mail route from London to York and Edinburgh, but it was not a new road; it was pieced together using existing local roads, through Barnet, Hatfield, Welwyn, Baldock and Biggleswade, to its meeting north of Huntingdon with the Old North Road via Ware and Royston (Webster 1974). The approach into Welwyn from the south, over Digswell Hill, was difficult, steep and muddy. It came down Welwyn Hill, across the bridge into the High Street, and turned at the church into Church Street, running into a surviving length of the Roman road as it left the village. The Welwyn Turnpike Trust, set up in 1725, attempted to improve this section with tollgates and milestones.

The branch road to Codicote and Hitchin left the main route at the turn by the church. This road was also taken in hand by the Trust, which repaired it in 1746 (Branch Johnson 1960, 45), and provided milestones. The medieval road from Hertford ran along the north bank of the river past the front of Lockleys, and into Church Street, avoiding the village centre. In the 18th century, when the house was rebuilt, the Church Street end was closed by a gate and the Hertford Road was diverted across the river into a wide sweep that ran into the lane on the south side of the mill, joining the Great North Road just south of the bridge. Welwyn did not, however, flourish as a coaching stop. It had some inns, but was never dominated by them. Its brief hour of fame was in the 18th century, at a time when the roads were being improved by the Welwyn Turnpike Trust and the rector, Dr Young, attempted to turn it into a fashionable spa town. This enterprise had failed by the time of his death in 1765, and apart from a few interesting buildings nothing was left to distinguish Welwyn from a village. The consolidation of landed estates prevented its expansion, and provided few sources of income other than agriculture or service. The rectory lands north of the river also prevented building. Until the early 19th century much of the block of land bordered by the High Street, Church Street, and Mill Lane was occupied by the farmyard, pasture, orchard and garden of the medieval rectory, and Mimram Walk was Farmyard Alley.

In Dr Young's day there were four large inns, the White Hart, the Swan, the Rose & Crown, and the Vine. The White Hart, on the corner of Prospect Place, and the Swan in the High Street are described below. The Rose & Crown in Church Street (also below) had fewer beds than the others but plenty of stabling. The Vine (no.18 Church Street; first mentioned in 1713) has been a private house since 1964 and is not a Listed Building. The only other inns listed in the 1756 victuallers' billetting returns (Branch Johnson n.d.) were the Chequers in Church Street and the White Horse in Mill Lane, and these were much smaller. In the 17th century there had been others: the Boar's Head next to the Swan was taken over in the mid 17th century, and the Red Lion behind the White Hart suffered a similar fate. This was 'a large house of some consequence', recorded from 1618, but was bought by the owners of the White Hart, and converted into cottages in 1740 (Branch Johnson 1960, 27).

Surviving Listed Buildings: 16th-17th centuries

16th and 17th century buildings still line the main streets, although none have yet produced evidence of any earlier surviving structure. They are described below in street order. Some of the apparently later buildings are also suspected of hiding timber-framing of similar date.

Church Street

No 4, at the east corner of the churchyard, is typical of buildings put up in late medieval churchyards to serve parish purposes. This one, a two-storey timber framed and brick structure, was built in the mid 16th century by Antony Carleton and his wife Anne Perient, who inherited half the manor of Lockleys in 1545 (Ballin & Tomkins 1982, 41). It was the Carleton Almshouse, and was converted into the parish workhouse in the 1750s (Branch Johnson 1960, 22, 38); it was probably also used for the Rector's charity school in the earlier 18th century, until a new school building opened in 1755 (Branch Johnson 1967, 14, 42).

No 14, the Rose & Crown, has a probably 17th century timber frame, of two storeys, and a brick and plastered 17th century rear central wing with a chimney stack near the north gable. The earliest definite reference dates to 1747, although a Rose is recorded in 1633. In 1756 the billetting returns noted stabling for 17 horses (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 166). At the rear of the yard is an earlier 17th century red brick building (the ends are modern) which was a coach house, used as a garage and motor service station in the early 20th century (Rook 1986, 28).

No 22, Rose Cottage, has a 16th century timber frame inside 17th or 18th century brick casing, and is only one storey with an attic, and an old tile roof. It has a plastered gabled cross wing on the west side and a timber-framed rear lean-to.

No 24 is also probably 16th century; in the 17th century the flooring was re-arranged, a fireplace added and pargetting applied to the first floor rear wall. The western extension is 19th century and later.

No 28, the Chequers, has a timber frame that is at least 17th century and probably older, with a 17th century external chimney. Its earliest dated reference is in 1721, when it was owned by William Oakley. The inn closed in 1940 and became a private house (Rook 1986, 14).

No 9 has a 17th century core inside later 18th century red brick, and half-timbered east gable. The chimney stack towards the west end is 17th century.

No 13, Holly Hall, appears to date to c1800 from the painted brick front block with its central pedimented projection, but behind is a 17th century timber-framed wing under an old tile roof, inside 18th century red brick casing. The property is a large one, set back from the street frontage and on a prestigious site almost opposite the church. The first recorded house, built by John Kyng in 1430, was rebuilt in 1663 and called the New House. The surrounding grounds, which extended to Mill Lane and the Old Rectory grounds, contained at various times a small brewhouse, a farmhouse, and a forge. The name Holly Hall was in use by 1732. The house was rebuilt and enlarged

c1770 but evidently incorporated at least part of the 1663 structure (Branch Johnson 1960, 28; Ashworth & Hillelson 1997).

No 17 has a probably 17th century timber frame inside an early 18th century red brick front, now painted. *No 21,* a house and shop, has a timber frame probably also dating from the 17th century, inside 18th or early 19th century brick, now painted.

Codicote Road

Ivy Cottage, on the corner of Forge Lane, has a 17th century or earlier timber frame, and an 18th century rear wing. It is cased in chequered red brick and plaster, with steep pitched old tile roofs, and has a 17th century chimney stack at the north gable end. From 1851, and possibly from the 1820s, until 1900, the house was used as a private day and boarding school; in the 1870s it was visited by Vincent van Gogh, whose sister Anne was an assistant at the school (Branch Johnson 1967, 43-4).

No 6, Guessens, was a timber-framed farmhouse of the 16th or 17th century, two storeys high and one room deep, but was remodelled and enlarged in the 18th century. At some time before 1749, when the rector, Dr Young, bought the house for his own use, it had been given a rear extension at the north end and fine interior panelling. Both parts are in red brick. Later in the century the front was heightened, new windows were added, and the facade stuccoed. In the early 19th century a service wing was added at the south end (Branch Johnson 1967, 16, 35).

High Street

No 2, Corner House, is a house and shop with a probably 17th century timber frame behind a mid 19th century painted stucco three-sided corner facade. A property here was bought by a Londoner in 1522, the first incomer to be recorded (Branch Johnson 1960, 29).

No 4 is another house and shop, a 17th century timber-framed composite range behind a 19th century plastered frontage. The south elevation to the alley has a 17th century external red brick chimney stack. The ground floor shop is modern.

No 10, also a house and shop, has a 16th or 17th century timber frame with two contemporary red brick chimney stacks, behind the 19th century frontage and modern shop.

No 1, the Wellington, was the *Swan Inn* until 1816. Although the Swan was a medieval inn (see above), the standing building has a timber frame that probably dates to the early 17th century (Pevsner 1977, 394). In the middle of the century it amalgamated with the Boar's Head next door (see no.3). The Swan was bought by Sir William Lytton of Knebworth in 1701, and the frontage was rebuilt by his heir, Lady Ann Russell, in the 1720s. New facilities were provided for the coaching trade in the outhouses at the same time. The central jettied gable is over the carriage arch which was filled in c1900. On either side are two long brick ranges with Georgian windows. In 1756 the Swan had 12 beds and stabling for 24 horses. It was not as important a coaching inn as the White Hart, but received the lesser services, to Hitchin, Bedford and the Midlands, and was used as a meeting place by the Welwyn

Turnpike Trust. In 1813 it was sold to J I Pryor, brewer of Baldock (Branch Johnson 1967, 26-33).

No 3, a house and shop, has an early 19th century red brick frontage, but it is a 17th century or earlier timber-framed building, and before the mid 17th century was the Boar's Head. When it was amalgamated with the Swan next door part of the property was detached as a dwelling, and in 1691 this went into separate ownership. It has been a bakery since at least 1776 (Branch Johnson 1967, 27). The rear wing is modern.

No 11a is a small 16th or 17th century timber-framed house with a large external chimney stack, inside painted brick. The upper floor has a horizontally sliding sash window.

No 41, Bridge Cottage, has an early-mid 18th century plastered front on an earlier timber-framed structure. It has a higher cross wing on the rear north side, and a modern extension on the north front. It has been extended to serve as the local surgery.

Mill Lane

No 30, the White Horse, is set back from the road. It is a 17th century timber-framed inn, with a tall contemporary chimney stack, and a cross wing to the rear. It appears in records from 1742 as an alehouse only, and in the 1756 billetting returns it had only one bed and stabling for 11 horses. It acquired a full licence only in 1919 (Jolliffe & Jones 1995, 168).

Nos 21-25, the Old Rectory: these were the rectory until Dr Young moved to Guessens in 1749; apart from about ten years under his successor it was thereafter in private occupation, and has been divided. The medieval rectory was said to be ruinous in 1518, so the present building is later, and confusing. 'The house comprises two two-storeyed and jettied timber-framed buildings… and a later addition to the west'; 'possibly … to a hall 'ruinous' in 1518 was added the large solar or chamber block, and subsequently the hall was replaced by a much smaller structure, now the east part… A lower two-storey range to the west is late 17th century. A narrow and slightly lower weather-boarded range was added parallel to the earlier buildings and possibly in stages, in the 18th century' (Smith 1993, 208; also Rook 1979).

No 31, the Mill House, is described above.

Prospect Place

No 50 was built as cottages in the late 16th or early 17th century; their timber frame was cased in red brick in the early 18th century. They were converted to a single house c1937.

No 52 was originally a 17th century timber-framed house, which now forms one bay at the left of an early 19th century red brick main block. The rear of the old wing has crow-stepped gables and two 'Gothic' windows on the west side.

These buildings were near the mill.

School Lane
No 2 (The White House) has a 16th or 17th century timber frame to the west of the centre block with its early 19th century plastered frontage.

No 4 (Little Manor Cottage) was built in the 16th or 17th century as a row of three cottages, timber framed. In the 18th century single casement dormer windows were added, and there are three gabled plank doors.

Surviving Listed Buildings: 18th century

These buildings, public and domestic, reflect the period when the ambitious and literary Rector, Dr Edward Young, attempted to compensate for his lack of preferment by attracting the fashionable to Welwyn. His house, Guessens, is described above. This was an old farmhouse which in the early 18th century was transformed into a gentleman's residence; in 1749 he moved there from the Old Rectory in Mill Lane, and received visitors from all over Europe. Other gentlemen's residences were also built in the 18th century, and many of the older buildings were given an up-to-date brick front disguising the timber framing. Holly Hall (above) was rebuilt.

The Assembly Rooms were built by Dr Young to promote the medicinal properties of a chalybeate spring found by himself in the corner of the Old Rectory grounds, just across Mill Lane. They were also intended as a place of public entertainment, and had a bowling green at the rear, stretching to the river. 'Welwyn Spa' was forgotten after Young's death in 1765, when water-drinking had gone out of fashion, but the Welwyn Assemblies continued until some time at the end of the 18th century. By 1832 the building was rated as a dwelling house (Branch Johnson 1967, 16-18). At the end of the 19th century it was converted into separate cottages by G E Dering of Lockleys, and the original main door was blocked. It is now no.32 Mill Lane, built in 1752, and nos. 2-6 Orchard Road, a rear wing added in 1765. The bowling green was partly built over in the late 1860s by the sewage works. The spring has also been built over (VCH 1912, 166).

The White Hart, Prospect Place, was the main coaching inn at Welwyn. The earliest reference is dated 1681, but in the 1750s it took over the property to the east and was rebuilt. The billetting returns listed it as having 14 beds and stabling for 34 horses. It incorporates the main building on the street corner, with parapet, and part of the house at no.6 which includes the carriage entrance. Both properties are mid 18th century red brick. The rear wing of the main building is early 18th century and some earlier timberwork may be present. The White Hart became part of the Lockleys estate in 1767.

Courthouse and meeting rooms, 6 Prospect Place: this is a mid-18th century red brick building of two storeys and attics, the centre front made prominent with a pedimented projection and pedimented doorcase. To the left is the carriage entrance to the White Hart, which still occupies part of no.6. The ground floor was used for the Petty Sessions court, and upstairs was a large meeting room or banqueting chamber. From

1860 it was the Welwyn Reading Room and Institute, and Welwyn Social Club in 1893. From 1894 it was used for the first meetings of Welwyn Rural District Council (Rook 1986; 1997, 124).

The 'Manor House' was built in 1798 as a new rectory, Guessens having been Dr Young's personal property and the Old Rectory in Mill Lane being considered no longer suitable (Branch Johnson 1967, 35-6). It is a red brick building of two to three storeys and a cellar, and was extended to north and south in the mid 19th century. It ceased to be the rectory in 1920 and is now divided. Much of its extensive grounds remain.

The Grange (3 Codicote Road) is an early 18th and early 19th century red brick house with L-plan rear extension. It has a slightly projecting centre with pedimented doorcase. It is shown on a map of Chamberlayn's Farm dating to 1710 (Ballin 1978). The 18th century red brick garden wall and a small timber-framed and brick barn, which now belong to no.1 Codicote Road, were built for the Grange.

Wendover Lodge, Church Street, is late 18th century, refaced in the 19th century and in the 1960s. The central block has two storeys and attics, stucco, with a pedimented door porch. It has been extended, and divided into flats.

Lockleys: the present house was built in 1717, by Edward Searle, a 'Turkey merchant' of London who bought the estate in 1715. It is of three storeys, nine bays, in brown brick with two-bay projecting wings with angle pilasters, and an attic above the cornice; the lower two storeys have a giant Doric order with pilasters and full entablature (Pevsner 1977, 395). It is a grand house, but with an archaic plan, of a hall with two cross-wings, and it is possible that it incorporates the structure of the earlier house and was not a complete rebuild (Smith 1993, 207). A south-east wing was added with a ballroom on the first floor, possibly by Sir George Shee who bought Lockleys c1815. In 1911 the house was restored by Blomfield for the daughter of G E Dering, who had owned Lockleys for much of the later 19th century. It has been a school since 1924. The formal garden with the river running in a double canal in front of the house, recorded on Sawyer's map in 1823 (and Dury & Andrews, 1766), was older than the 1717 building. Chauncy, writing in 1700, refers to 'cuts' made in the river which were 'stored with fresh trouts' and other fish (Branch Johnson 1960, 34; J T Smith 1993, 207). This 17th century garden was swept away in the 1830s (below).

Danesbury was originally called St John Lodge, and was new in 1775, having been built by Mary St John. In 1824 it was bought by its tenant, William Blake, a banker. He added a large block on the south-west side, and the Blake family lived in the house until 1919, when it was sold and soon after gutted by fire. William Blake's additions (Smith 1993, 206-7) were demolished and the remainder rebuilt. The name was apparently given by the Blakes, deriving from the (unfounded) local legend that the Danes had been massacred in the area. The house was a hospital from c1945 to 1995, when it was restored, extended and converted to private dwellings. The exterior is largely 1820s in appearance.

Bridge House (26 High Street), 45 High Street, and *The Old House (4 London Road)* are all smaller 18th century houses. The Old House has a dated brick, 1729, in its red brickwork with burnt headers.
Little Chequers, 7 London Road, is in chequered red brick with a steep old tile roof and a wide plank central door and 19th century painted wood sign.
6-12 Mimram Road are an 18th century cottage terrace, timber-framed inside red brick with a plaster plinth to sill level, and four front doors.

Dr Young's Free School
There is documentary evidence that Dr Young's school was originally opened in 1714, before his arrival as rector in 1730. It is assumed to have been held in the Carleton Almshouse, no.4 Church Street, at the corner of the churchyard. In 1739 Dr Young rented from the vestry a plot of land behind the almshouse and the Rose and Crown, and had a new school building erected there in the 1750s. In 1830 the school was amalgated with the new National School in School Lane; Dr Young's Foundation continued to fund 16 boys. The old school building was demolished in 1858 and the site incorporated into the churchyard (Branch Johnson 1967, 42-3; Burg 1995, 83).

2.5 19th century development

About 1810 the High Street was widened and the building line set back (Branch Johnson 1960, 46). At this date the density of housing was low; the village still had properties with extensive grounds. The first half of the 19th century saw a rise in population and gradual infill in the village, but no outward expansion. A plan of the Old Rectory of c1810 shows the house, the farm and the surviving portion of the moat, just before the land was sold and the first major changes in the village centre became possible. By 1823, when a map of the parish was drawn by T Sawyer, Mimram Walk had been cut through from the High Street to Mill Lane. The moat had gone, but few new buildings had yet appeared. The sale of Vine Farm on the east side of Mill Lane led to the building of 31 Church Street and 8-14 Mill Lane in 1821 (Rook 1986, 34). At the same time the Danesbury estate was expanded as a result of enclosures, effectively preventing any growth to the north of the village.

In 1834 the Welwyn Turnpike Trust employed McAdam to engineer a new line for the Great North Road over Digswell Hill, eliminating the worst stretch (which survived as a relic in the landscape). He also eased the gradient of Welwyn Hill and rebuilt the bridge at its foot (Branch Johnson 1960, 47); the original milestones were replaced with cast iron ones. In 1877, when the Trust was dissolved, the tollhouses were sold and the gates removed.

The 1834 road improvements also included a new bridge carrying the road to Hertford over the river at Lockleys (SMR 5111; Branch Johnson 1970, 180), taking the road a little further from the house. The 1837 map records the disappearance of the 18th century road line, which crossed the river in a sharp dogleg over the double canal. The garden was landscaped at the same time, the canals were destroyed and the river turned into a more 'natural' single channel. The 1834 bridge, abandoned in 1906 by yet another diversion, now stands isolated in the park.

The 1837 tithe award map is clearly based on Sawyer's, but with the 1834 road changes, and others, now recorded. These include the appearance of Hobbs Hill path. The regrading of Welwyn Hill enabled several of the 19th century public facilities to build there, on the main road south of the village (below). By the end of the century, however, there was still little expansion. The workhouse, hospital, school, and fire engine house on Welwyn Hill had not been joined by housing.

Chapels and Schools

Bethel Independent Chapel, Hobbs Hill
In 1792 a licence was granted for the use of a newly erected chapel on Hobbs Hill, erected largely at his own expense by the Rev Thomas Oxenham, a follower of the popular Calvinistic preacher William Huntington. Oxenham, who had been a mangle manufacturer in Oxford Street, London, built next door to the chapel a house for himself and his family, where he lived until his resignation in 1832. He also established a burial ground, used for interments until 1871. The chapel remained private property until 1891, when it was bought by the congregation. In 1959 it was converted into a private house (Branch Johnson 1967, 39-40).

Ebenezer Strict Baptist Chapel, Mimram Walk
This opened in 1834 as the Ebenezer Huntingtonian Chapel, built by a breakaway group from the Bethel Chapel (Branch Johnson 1967, 41). In 1847 Upton (Burg 1995, 83) found the two congregations still at loggerheads. In 1885 the Ebenezer was reorganised and constituted as a Strict Baptist chapel. The building is a 'plain, discreet Late Georgian' box of two storeys, in brick and painted stucco, with a slate roof (Pevsner 1977, 395). The gable ends have side pilasters with slight cornices, and the north gable end, facing the street, has the date 1834.

National School
In 1830 a new National School opened in School Lane, incorporating the pupils of Dr Young's Free School but offering education for many more. In 1858 the school moved to new purpose-built premises in London Road (Welwyn Hill), with accommodation for 90 boys, 70 girls and 60 infants (Branch Johnson 1967, 43). The Victorian building survived as the infants' school after new buildings were put up on the field behind, south-west of the road. These are now St Mary's School; the 1858 building has been converted into sheltered housing. The original early 19th century school survives as no.33 School Lane.

The Union Workhouse was opened in 1830, the first of the new facilities on Welwyn Hill. It was enlarged in 1848 (Branch Johnson 1960, 39). The Union succeeded the parish workhouse in Church Street. The 1898 6" OS map records the presence of an Isolation Hospital at the end of a track in the fields behind the workhouse, and this was apparently run as part of the workhouse itself (Hawkins 2000). The hospital succeeded the 18th century parish pesthouse, which was at Ninnings Wood from 1774 until 1830 (Branch Johnson 1967, 45). The workhouse closed in 1921 and the building became Welwyn Children's Home (Busby 1976, 50). In 1926 the by-pass was constructed between the workhouse and the hospital, and the latter became the new Council Offices. The Victorian building had gone by c1970, and the site became

isolated on the south side of the roundabout giving access to the motorway. Housing is now being built.

A *Cottage Hospital* was built in 1901-2 in an isolated position in Codicote Road. This was one of the cottage hospitals built as a memorial on the death of Queen Victoria. It was succeeded in 1936 by the new Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital in School Lane, on land given by the Wilsheres of The Frythe (Welwyn Appraisal Group 2000).

Industry and utilities

With the change to railway travel the coaching trade faded away, and the inns declined into local public houses. Local sources of income other than agriculture and service trades were of some variety, particularly with the addition of new utilities during the century, but all were small in scale. At least two were at the instigation of George Edward Dering, of Lockleys. He was an eccentric and reclusive inventor of some ability, who used his interests and wealth to benefit Welwyn to a certain extent. He bought up many properties in the village and converted them into freeholds Branch Johnson 1960, 68). But he only spent part of each year in Welwyn until his death in 1911, and had no family there. His influence was intermittent, and although it provided employment as well as amenities it was not enough to trigger any development of the village. In 1906 he paid for the diversion of the Hertford Road away from his house. This involved large-scale earthmoving operations, for two new routes through a gravel-capped knoll south of Prospect Place. The other large 19th century estates, Danesbury and The Frythe, had no particular influence on the development of the village other than preventing its physical expansion. The even larger holdings of the Cowper estates, reaching into the parish at Digswell, had a similar effect.

The railway
Landowners between Welwyn and Hitchin prevented the Great Northern main line from passing through Welwyn itself, and as a result the line was carried over the river Mimram on the mighty Digswell viaduct, east of the village, and opened in 1850. The nearest station is Welwyn North. The stretch (over a mile) of the Hertford Road from Prospect Place to the station was Station Road from 1850. Welwyn nearly became a junction, with the opening of the Hertford & Welwyn Railway in March 1858, and the Luton & Dunstable line which opened from Welwyn to Luton in 1860. The temporary wooden platforms for these branches, however, were nearer to the present Welwyn Garden City, and both branches were within months of opening absorbed by the Great Northern Railway, and the trains run from Hatfield. As a result Welwyn was left isolated (Cockman 1983, 20).

Ironworks
At Lockleys Dering, who was a member of the Iron & Steel Institute, had a workshop and forge, in the outbuildings around the yard north of the house. This was no small affair, as it employed 30 men (Branch Johnson 1960, 67; Ballin & Tomkins 1982, 42). Part of the buildings survive.

Gasworks
In 1860 Dering built a private gasworks in London Road, which supplied gas for street lighting to Welwyn, Codicote, Digswell, and Tewin Water. In Welwyn itself a voluntary rate to help pay for the street lights raised little, and from 1876 they were only lit during the winter. By 1901 the works were leased to two local operators, and on Dering's death in 1911 they appear to have bought the works as the Welwyn, Knebworth & District Gas Co. It closed in 1933 (Branch Johnson 1970, 86).

Sewage Works
Reports by the local Medical Officer in the 1870s deplored the unsavoury condition of the river, and the inefficient water supply and drains (Branch Johnson 1960, 63). Sewage works were established in the late 1860s on the riverbank below the mill, on a triangle of land behind the old Assembly Rooms (Branch Johnson 1967, 18). In the early 20th century Welwyn RDC constructed new sewage works with filter beds further south (1922 OS 6" map), now destroyed by the roundabout giving access to the motorway. The remnant of the original works is only now being redeveloped for housing.

Welwyn Brewery
The 1830 Act allowing anyone to open a beer house on payment of £2 encouraged small local breweries, and the first record of the Welwyn Brewery in School Lane is dated 1833. Most of the records have been lost, but in 1851 James Deards, cooper, was in charge, and John Deards amalgamated the brewery with his beerhouse, the Fox at Woolmer Green, in 1875. The Fox was the brewery's only tied house. In 1892 the lease was taken over by J P Mew, but it remained a very small affair. It was in a two-storey building with a pump in the yard and an attached off-licence. When it was taken over by McMullens in 1897 the brewery was closed, although the off-licence and the Fox were kept open. The off-licence operated until 1954 (Connell 1981). The brewery building has lost its top storey but survives behind the Bridge Cottage surgery.

Fire engine house
The parish engine is first mentioned in the Vestry minutes in 1761, and was kept in the house next to the church house in Church Street (above) until 1837. At this period public facilities were developing along Welwyn Hill, and the engine was moved to new premises there. A volunteer fire brigade with new equipment was organised on the Vestry's orders in 1873, but the brigade kept its manual pump for many years, as there was an efficient estate brigade with a steam pump at Tewin Water, paid for by the Beit family. Welwyn RDC took over the volunteer brigade only in 1938, and moved it from the old engine house on Welwyn Hill to the new fire station in Prospect Place (Branch Johnson 19--).

Tanyard
A manuscript account of sudden flooding by the river in February 1795 describes how 'the tanner's yard was filled with water and the bark much damaged in both his barns'. When the tannery was first set up is unclear, but the yard is shown on Sawyer's 1823 map, on the east bank of the river. By 1837 it was the 'Old Tanyard' and belonged to the owner of Guessens, just on its north side; the site was later cleared and made part of the grounds of the house.

Brick kilns and maltings
The 1837 tithe award lists brick kiln fields at Harmer Green and in two other places in the parish, but none were close to the village itself. The major works were on Digswell Hill, south of the village. The Digswell House estate had a tile kiln here, within the parish. At the top of Digswell Hill, in the area of Homerswood, was a brickworks recorded in deeds from 1678 to 1861. In 1690 it belonged to George Carpenter of Welwyn, brickmaker; in 1705 it had brick kilns and other buildings, including malthouses. By 1861, the kilns, maltings and granaries had been sold and redeveloped, but the site is adjacent to Deard's Brickworks of Ayot Green, which opened in 1866. There was also a malting in Welwyn itself. The 1837 tithe map shows Malting Mead, downstream from the mill, and a malting yard belonging to the mill appears in a deed of 1891.

Rope-making
A rhyme describing the bounds of the parish, c1812-24, includes a reference to rope spinners working in a narrow strip field on the boundary with Codicote (Rook 19--). The making of ropes demanded a very long narrow working space. It is not clear how long ropes continued to be made there, but this strip, with a building on the Fulling Mill Lane frontage, is visible on the 1823 Sellers map and is still present, with building, on the 1922 6" OS map. The field is today partly extant behind the properties in Oakhill Drive.

Welwyn Beehive Works
The Beehive Works were established by Thomas Blow close to Welwyn North railway station in the mid 1880s, and made both wooden hives and traditional straw skeps. The demonstration hives were laid out in the grounds, and products went by train all over the country. In August 1898 a spectacular fire burnt down the works as well as the telegraph poles on the railway line, but new works opened on the site by 1902 (Mander 1998, 58; 2000 years of Welwyn (1975); HALS index cards). As E H Taylor Ltd it made beekeeping equipment until 1982, when the working hives were removed elsewhere. The factory closed in 1984 and the site was used for housing.

2.6 Welwyn Garden City and the 20th century

For much of the 19th century no appreciable growth took place at Welwyn, although towards the end of the century new housing began to appear in outlying parts of the parish. Woolmer Green, which had since the 17th century had inns serving the traffic on the Great North Road (and is a sizeable hamlet on the Seller map of 1676), acquired a school; by 1900 it needed a church (VCH 1912, 170). Part of the area around Welwyn North station and Harmer Green was developed for housing by a syndicate from about the same time as the beehive works were established (VCH 1912, 81). In 1919 the Cowper estates at Digswell and elsewhere were sold to pay death duties, and Ebenezer Howard bought 1688 acres of this land in Digswell, Welwyn, and Hatfield parishes (Munby 1977, 216, 240). In 1920 Welwyn Garden City Ltd was formed, and Louis de Soissons appointed Town Planner and Architect. The core of the new town was centred on what had been farmland south of Digswell and Sherrardswood Park, at Handside Farm. The commercial centre was planned to

take advantage of the railway…. It was intended from the beginning that those living in the new garden city should be employed in new local industries

Welwyn itself began to grow after the building of the by-pass in 1926, from --- to the Clock (Welwyn Appraisal Group 2000). On the north side of the village the Danesbury estate remained intact

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