**EXTENSIVE URBAN SURVEY
FOR
BEDFORDSHIRE**

LUTON ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Project

English Heritage has initiated a national series of Extensive Urban Surveys. This report is an archaeological assessment of Luton and forms part of the Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) for Bedfordshire. This survey of the 12 historic towns of Bedfordshire is funded by English Heritage (EH) and managed by the County Archaeological Officer (CAO) of Bedfordshire County Council (BCC). The survey is being jointly undertaken by staff of Albion Archaeology and the Heritage and Environment Group of BCC.

The EUS comprises three stages, Data Compilation, Assessment and Strategy. The first stage, Data Compilation, draws together the accessible history of the town, known archaeological sites and historic buildings data. The Assessment presents this evidence in the form of a report which provides a history of the town, an account of its buried and standing archaeology, together with an assessment of archaeological potential. The Strategy stage will draw on the Assessment to develop a strategic framework for the management of the archaeological resource for each town.

The chronological framework used in the Assessment reports to describe each town's development (normally section 5) reflects the periodisation used in the Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER). Any broad dating system of this kind has limitations in the face of the mass of detailed evidence that exists for each town. It has, therefore, occasionally (*e.g.* Bedford in the Saxon and Saxo-Norman periods, or Luton in the early industrial period) been necessary to use slightly different chronological divisions. In addition, the town of Sandy is exceptional in its own right because only the <u>Roman</u> town has been included in the Bedfordshire EUS.

1.2 Structure of this Document

This report has been compiled using a number of sources including the Bedfordshire Historic Environment Record (HER), the Bedfordshire and Luton Archives and Records Service (BLARS) and the Albion Archaeology (formerly BCAS) Project Database.

The location and topography of Luton is described in Section 2. The nature of the evidence is discussed in Section 3 and a historical summary of the town is presented in Section 4. The archaeological and historical development of the town is described by chronological period in Section 5. Section 6 comprises an assessment of Luton's character, importance and potential. The historical development of the town and areas of archaeological potential are presented in plan form at the end of the report.

2. LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

Luton is a large industrial town forming an independent unitary authority in southern Bedfordshire (Fig 1). It is located 25km to the south of the historic town of Bedford. The historic town of Dunstable is situated immediately to the west. St Albans is situated 12km to the south of the town.

The A6 runs through the town from north to south and connects Luton with Bedford to the north and the M1 to St Albans to the south. The River Lea has its source at Leagrave and runs in a predominantly NW-SE direction through the town. Its course through the town centre is now covered over.

Luton sits on alluvium, between valley gravels to both east and west. It is on an undulating, fan-shaped wedge of gravel at the north end of the Lea gap through the Chilterns (Dony & Dyer 1975). The parish church is sited on a chalk knoll, which extends into the river valley. The old part of Luton sits in the valley, making use of the knoll and the river for protection (Edwards 1974, 33). The modern part of the town extends onto the surrounding chalk and clay (Bedfordshire County Council Drift Geology Map 1984).

Luton is also situated on the Icknield Way, the ridgeway track running SW to NE, which probably had several branches and forded the River Lea at Leagrave and Luton. This was one of the major routeways in the country from Neolithic through to Saxon times and had a major influence on settlement within these periods.

The Agricultural Land Classification of England and Wales, Sheet 147, shows the area covered by Luton as predominantly urban in use, with some areas of primarily non-agricultural land (parks and open spaces). Land to the NW of the town is classified as Grade II, while land to the south is Grade III.

3. NATURE OF THE EVIDENCE

3.1 *Previous Archaeological Investigations*

There have been a number of archaeological investigations within the present urban area of Luton, but very few within the historic core of the town which is the focus of this report (Fig 2). Most were carried out by Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service (BCAS, now Albion Archaeology). Other excavations have been carried out by the Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust (HAT) and the Thames Valley Archaeological Service (TVAS)

Of the handful of investigations conducted within or near the historic core, a 1996 watching brief (BCAS 260) carried out during pipe-laying at Flowers Way uncovered post-medieval human remains in the vicinity of a Victorian church cemetery. More recently, a small excavation in Castle Street confimed the existence of a large ditch of defensive proportions (TVAS 02/73 – for report see Thames Valley Archaeological Services, 2002). This had previously been encountered by excavation in 1963 (Dyer *et al*, 1964) and is assumed to represent the remains of Robert de Waudari's castle.

Of those excavations located outside the historic core but within the present urban area, a brief summary is given here.

An evaluation (BCAS 342) conducted in advance of pipe-laying near to the River Lea, between Bramingham Road, Leagrave and New Bedford Road, Luton in 1991, produced evidence of Romano-British settlement. Further Romano-British features, including a possible defensive ditch, were observed during a subsequent watching brief.

Two undated features were uncovered in 1997, at Runfold Avenue (BCAS 473), in the vicinity of the earlier evaluation. A small quantity of early Roman pottery was recovered from the adjacent spoil heap. This may relate to the Roman settlement known to have been located at Limbury.

Evaluation of the former Croda site, once a gelatine works in New Bedford Road, revealed evidence of much ground truncation in post-medieval times, which may explain why no features of archaeological significance were found (HAT 613). The Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust also carried out an evaluation at Ambleside near Limbury (HAT 522). Features dating from the late Iron Age and early Roman periods suggest general settlement of the first terrace of the River Lea at this time.

Some early archaeological discoveries should be mentioned here. Excavations at Rosslyn Crescent in 1962 uncovered at least seven Iron Age cremation burials which were presumably associated with a nearby farmstead settlement (Bunker *et al* 1993). An important early 5th-6th century Anglo-Saxon cemetery was uncovered at Argylle Avenue in 1925 (Hagen 1971).

3.2 Historical Evidence

Volume II of the Victoria County History, published in 1908, gives a history of the Flitt Hundred, which includes Luton. Annette Edwards produced a Luton Town Survey for Bedfordshire County Council in 1974, which is unpublished and held by the Heritage and Environment Section. There are books on the history of Luton by Austin (1928), Dony and Dyer (1975) and Bunker, Holgate and Nichols (1993). Articles on aspects of the town's history and archaeology have appeared in the Bedfordshire Archaeological Journal, the Journal of the Manshead Archaeological Society, the Bedfordshire Magazine and the volumes of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society. A good general background is provided by Joyce Godber's *History of Bedfordshire* (1969)

The Bedfordshire and Luton Archive and Record Service hold a great deal of material about Luton, including manorial documents, but the majority of this relates to the post-medieval period. There is an extensive series of parish registers, dating from 1602. Census returns from 1801 to 1991 are held there, as are a series of trade directories, from 1785 onwards.

The map evidence for Luton parish is good, but there is virtually no material prior to the 19th century. The earliest map of the town is an engraving by Thomas Jeffreys in 1765. The road layout is clearly shown, as is the approximate extent of the town's buildings. However, this is not detailed and the scale is approximate. The first complete map of the town is the 1842 Tithe map and award (MAT/30/1 & 2). There is no Inclosure map, due to the piecemeal nature of the inclosure of the open fields over time. The first edition Ordnance Survey map dates to 1880.

The Historic Environment Record maintained by Bedfordshire County Council's Historic Environment Section lists over 200 historic buildings for Luton, ranging from the 12th century parish church of St Mary's (HER 856) to the Vauxhall buildings dating to the 1940s (HER 15580).

The Albion projects database is a catalogue of all the work that has been carried out by Albion Archaeology (formerly Bedfordshire County Archaeology Service). Copies of archaeological reports by Albion/BCAS and other archaeological units who have excavated in the area can be consulted in the Bedfordshire County Council Historic Environment Record.

Luton Museum contains much material on the history of the town, particularly related to the development of the hat industry. Luton library's local studies section also contains a great deal of material, including popular books, magazine and newspaper articles, and unpublished compilations of data, such as the manorial court rolls.

4. HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Luton's origins as a town are probably middle-late Saxon. There is some limited evidence that the site of the medieval town was settled in the Roman period. This would seem to be concentrated in the Church Street and Park Street areas. However, the majority of evidence for Roman occupation is well outside the medieval core, in the Round Green and Runfold Estate areas. The settlement at Limbury seems to have originated in Roman times, with some continuity of occupation into the Saxon period.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles' entry for AD571 records that an army of Saxons led by Cuthwulf engaged British forces at Bedanford (Bedford?) and that four royal vills were taken; these can be identified as Lygeanberg (Luton), Aylesbury, Bensington and Ensham (Savage 1983). If taken as historical fact, this implies that Limbury was held as part of a British territory for at least part of the 5th and 6th centuries.

The reference to the settlement at Limbury or Lygeanberg (fortified place on the river Lygea) is the earliest recorded name for a settlement in the Luton area (Dony & Dyer 1975, 17, Savage 1983). Luton itself may have formed a separate settlement, further down the river (Woodcock 1950: 90). The later Saxon name for Luton itself is Lygetune (Davis 1855: 2). The name combines the Celtic name for the river with the Saxon 'tun'. In the Domesday Book of 1086 it is recorded as Loitoine, in King John's charter as Loyton, and by Edward III's reign it is recorded as Luytone (*ibid*).

An 8th century charter of King Offa confers a settlement at Bishopscot (Biscot) to St Albans Abbey (Page 1908). Entries in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles record that in AD913 Luton was attacked by a Danish force and successfully defended (Savage 1983).

In AD871 the Wedmore treaty between King Alfred and the Danish leader, Guthrum, placed Luton precisely on the boundary between Saxon and Danish territories, though it is the source of the River Lea rather than the settlement itself which is mentioned in the document.

St Mary's Church is said to have been founded in the 10th century although not necessarily on exactly the same site as the present church. It is supposed to have been moved to a new site in 1121 (see Meadows 1975). The Domesday Book records that the Saxon priest, Morcar, held the church at that time. The population can be estimated at about 500 to 800. It can be assumed that Luton was already a sizeable settlement in the late Saxon period, prior to the Norman Conquest.

By the time of the Domesday survey, Luton manor is listed as being among the king's lands, and it had been in the hands of the Crown since the reign of Edward the Confessor, within the Flitt Hundred (Page 1908: 350). The manor had several mills and a market in its possession. The church and its land may also have belonged to the manor at this time. It was one of the largest manors in Bedfordshire and included many of the hamlets surrounding the town itself.

It remained in the hands of the Crown until it was granted by Henry 1st to Robert Earl of Gloucester in the early 12th century. However it was taken away from him by King Stephen in 1139 in retaliation for Robert's support of Matilda in her claim to the throne; it was given instead to the foreign mercenary, Robert de Waudari.

Robert de Waudari consolidated his position by building a wooden castle on the high ground to the south of Luton, overlooking the town. It was pulled down 15 years later under the terms of a truce. A second castle was built on a different site (to the east of the church) by Fulk de Breaute in 1221. This may have been even more short-lived, possibly being destroyed in 1224 or 1225.

In 1182, the manor reverted to the Crown, and in 1194, King Richard granted it to Baldwin de Bethune (Earl of Albemarle). After exchanging hands several times it went through a period of division and recombination, beginning in 1274. Three portions of the manor became subsidiary manors with separate identities. One portion became the property of Dunstable Priory in 1387 and was reunited with the rest of the manor property after the Dissolution (Page 1908: 354). Another portion became Woodcroft (later Halyard) manor and retained a separate identity from Luton manor. Luton Hoo, not mentioned until the 13th century, was separate from the royal manor of Luton until the 17th century – when it came to be regarded as the seat of the Lords of Luton manor.

The earliest river crossing at Luton may have been a ford in the Church Street area, or perhaps a ford in the North Bridge area. A medieval bridge existed at North Bridge, but this reverted to being a ford in the succeeding period. The late 18th century saw the establishment of two stone bridges here and a bridge where the Church Street ford was located.

An annual fair was held in the churchyard and ran for one week from 15th August onwards (Dony & Dyer 1975, 44). It is likely that this fair was established as a celebration of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, to whom the church was dedicated, and may have its origins in Saxon times. The weekly market at Luton was also established in the late Anglo-Saxon period. It was originally held on a Sunday but this was changed to a Monday in around 1202 (Monday is still Luton's market day). A market house was in place on Market Hill by the 18th century. This was replaced by the Corn Exchange in 1867, which in turn was demolished in 1951.

There was a fire in Luton in 1336. It destroyed many of the houses in the town, most of which were made out of wood. It is uncertain what proportion of Luton's population died during the Black Death. By 1546, there were 1,500 "houselying people" in Luton (Page 1908: 348).

Luton's open fields were subject to piecemeal enclosure over a period of many centuries. By the time the "Luton Enclosure Act" of 1808 was passed, all that remained to be enclosed was one and a half acres of land at Little Moor and eighteen acres at Stockingstone Lane. Despite the imposition of statutory

enclosure, the rights of common over all the open common fields in the parish were lost before the end of the 18th century.

The straw plait and hat making craft probably took root in Luton in the 17th century. At that time it was very much a cottage industry. By the 19th century, hat manufacture was prompting huge expansion in the town, both in terms of construction work and in terms of a growing population - attracted to the town from neighbouring areas by the work opportunities. Factories and warehouses for hat making (as well as associated industries such as box making) were built in the town centre. The population of the town in 1801 was 3,095. By 1821 the census data divides the civil parish from the expanding township, at 4,529 and 2,986 respectively. By 1901, Luton's population is recorded as a homogenous "borough" with a population of 36,404. The town had a population of 50,000 by 1914 (Kennett 1974, 1). For census data, see Table 10. In the space of a single century, Luton had made the transition from a quiet market town to a populous industrial centre.

Another factor in Luton's growth was its brewing industry. The town has a history of malting and brewing which dates back to the medieval period, when there may have been as many as 60 malt kilns (Dony & Dyer 1975, 83). Brick making was also an important 19th century industry with medieval roots. A few brickworks survived into the early 20th century, though the majority had disappeared by 1879 (Cox 1979).

Many improvements were made to the town in the 19th century. Gas street lighting was introduced in 1834. A town hall was built in 1837. Sewers were constructed in 1850, and water pipes were laid in 1870. The railway and station were constructed in 1858. A covered market for the sale of plait was built in Waller Street in 1869, and a cottage hospital and swimming baths were built in 1872. Luton became a borough in 1876.

In the early 20th century hat-making declined and started to be replaced by engineering industries. Vauxhall car manufacturers came to the town in 1905. Other products made in Luton were ball-bearings, gas cookers, meters and chemicals. Trams ran between 1908 and the 1932. The airport opened in 1938. The Town Hall, burnt down in a riot in 1919, was rebuilt in 1936. The boundaries of the town were extended to include Leagrave, Limbury and Stopsley in 1928/1933.

As an industrial centre Luton was targeted by German bombers in WW2; over 1,500 houses were damaged and had to be replaced. Many new estates were built, enlarging the town further. The M1 motorway, running through the enlarged town, was constructed in 1959. The Arndale Centre was built on the site of many of the old hat making factories and warehouses in 1962.

The population in 1951 was 110,381. By 1991 the population was 167,009 (one hundred and eleven times the size of the estimated 16th century population). It is now estimated at 183,000. In 1997 Luton was made a unitary authority. The town continues to grow despite the closure of the Vauxhall Car Works in 2001-2.

5.   ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

5.1   *The Prehistoric Period (c10,000BC–AD43)*

Although there is no evidence for the prehistoric occupation of the area covered by the historic core of Luton, there are several sites and finds from the area covered by the modern town and the surrounding area (Edwards 1974, 33).

Evidence for the Palaeolithic occupation of the Luton area comes in the form of thousands of flint implements. These were discovered during the 19th century in the Round Green (HER 358) and Mixes Hill (HER 189) areas of the town (Dony & Dyer 1975, 2). The artefacts were discovered beneath brick earth in old clay pits, at depths of 12 to 25 feet (3.66m - 7.62m). One of the Mixes Hill pits contained a male skeleton, accompanied by animal bone and flint implements (HER 189). Palaeolithic implements have also been found at Dallow, Ramridge End (HER 364), Leagrave (HER 639), and Waulud's Bank (HER 820) (Page 1908: 348). The work of Worthington Smith in Luton and Caddington demonstrated the great potential of this part of the River Lea valley for the survival of working floors and artefacts of the middle Palaeolithic period (Wymer 1999).

Evidence for Mesolithic occupation is scant, although excavations at Leagrave Marsh recovered a pick-like tool, which may date to this era (Dony & Dyer 1975, 6).

Neolithic occupation in the area is well attested. Several barrows are known to have existed in the area. Biscot Windmill (HER 179) stood on a long barrow, and there was another long barrow on the Icknield Way at the foot of Galley Hill (HER 116). This was excavated in 1961, revealing a skeleton with Neolithic pottery sherds. A later Roman burial had been placed over the top.

The first settlement at Luton may have existed by around 3000BC. It was probably established at the foot of a low gravel hill in the Recreation Ground at Sundon Park (Dony & Dyer 1975, 9). This position, well north of the medieval town, would have been advantageous because it is situated next to the source of the Lea. The remains of a circular hut were found here, measuring 3m in diameter, with wattle and daub walls (*ibid.*). Around the hill is a substantial D-shaped bank and ditch construction known as Waulud's Bank (HER 820), where large quantities of arrowheads and skin scrapers have been found. Rescue excavations at Waulud's Bank prior to the construction of a dual carriageway confirmed that the earthwork was Neolithic, with a ditch 6ft deep, and 30ft wide. Finds of arrowheads and the closeness of marshes suggest a hunting economy, supplemented by animal husbandry and agriculture (Dyer, CBA Newsletter 1972).

The Bronze Age is represented by a late Bronze Age spearhead (HER 14740), found in 1963 at Little Wood, Farley Hill (Hagen 1973, 2).

Evidence for occupation of the Luton area during the Iron Age comes in the form of Dray's Ditches (HER 113), which is one of only two scheduled monuments in the parish, the other being Waulud's Bank. This monument is really three V-shaped dykes, which originally ran parallel from Streatley towards the north end of Warden Hill (Dony & Dyer 1975, 11). They may represent a territorial boundary to control traffic along the Icknield Way. They were separated from each other by packed chalk, and probably had palisades between them (*ibid*.). BCAS conducted a watching brief over these earthworks, when they were threatened by road building. Excavations were conducted in 1959 and in 1971 (Dyer, 1972). The 1971 rescue excavation was conducted prior to the building of a housing estate and a bypass road, and confirmed the presence and shape of the three ditches.

Sherds of late Iron Age pottery and traces of a timber causeway were found in the area of Willow Way (Dony & Dyer 1975, 12). A group of Belgic cremation urns (HER 1946) was discovered a mile east of the ford in Rosslyn Crescent, Biscot, in 1961. Coins of the Morini tribe were found at Leagrave and Stopsley in 1870 and 1949 respectively. A Romano-British coin of Tasciovanus was found at Willow Way in 1870, and a bronze coin of Cunobelinus was discovered here in 1960 (Dony and Dyer 1975).

An Iron Age settlement site, comprising pits, ditches and postholes, was excavated by the Manshead Society during roadworks on Skimpot Lane. Considerable amounts of animal bone, fragments of human bone and Iron Age pottery were reported (Manshead Magazine 1989). Some late Iron Age features were discovered during a watching brief (WB93) at Skimpot Road (HER 15287) in 1987.

There was, therefore, an extensive agricultural landscape in the general area in the Iron Age. This must have extended to some degree into what later became the historic core of Luton.

5.2   The Roman Period (AD43 – AD410)

5.2.1   Settlement Evidence
Native Belgic and Romano-British pottery sherds of 1st century AD date were discovered in a garden on the corner of Park Street and Seymour Road. A Romano-British rubbish pit or shallow ditch, fragments of tiles, imbrex and flue tile, iron nails, animal bone and a possible corroded barrel lock were also discovered. This suggests the presence of a substantial Romano-British building with a tiled roof somewhere in the Park Street area. Finds of Roman pottery from Brache farmhouse may relate to the same occupation (Hudspith 1999, 9).

In the 2nd century AD, there was a Roman settlement at Limbury, roughly where the Runfold Estate now stands (Dony & Dyer 1975, 14). Here, W H Manning found traces of a timber-built settlement of the 2nd-4th centuries AD destroyed by fire (HER 115 and 15290). An archaeological evaluation at Runfold Avenue (RA473) located two undated features and a small quantity of early Roman pottery.

The remains of a Roman "building site" were uncovered during construction of a warehouse (now demolished) in Waller Street (Austin 1928, 24). A later extension revealed a kiln furnace (lined with bricks and with an arched roof), tiles, and a section of an ancient drain running from the site towards Church Street (HER 205). A Roman building is thought to have stood north of the church here (Dony & Dyer 1975, 16) and Roman building debris has also been found south of the church in Vicarage Street (HER 10599).

Possible settlement is indicated in the Round Green area (Dony & Dyer 1975, 16). Workmen found urns and other pottery vessels, including two cinerary urns, one with a cremation (HER 183) at Richmond Hill in 1926 when Lower Cowridge End Farm was being converted into Richmond Hill housing estate (Austin 1928, 29).

In 1906 a Roman waste-pit was found at Grange Farm, Biscot, containing potsherds, human and animal bone (HER 115). At a later date human skeletons were found near the pit, with pottery, bones of oxen, sheep and a dog (Austin 1928, 22). At a gravel pit on Stoney Hill, Limbury, another Roman pit with pottery and bones was found (*ibid*.).

Pottery, animal bone and pieces of baked clay were found at the supposed site of a Roman kiln near Waulud's Bank in 1884, as well as two human burials. A possible Roman house was discovered north of the historic core in what is now Bramingham Road, near Ailsworth Road. Workmen here described finding what may have been a mosaic (Austin 1928).

An archaeological evaluation was conducted by BCAS in advance of pipe-laying near to the River Lea in 1991 (LV91, project 342). Twenty-three transects were excavated; six of these produced some evidence of Romano-British settlement, including structural features.

5.2.2 Other Sites

Evidence for the use of the Icknield Way as a road in the Roman period comes from excavations at Turnpike Drive 1971-2. Cart ruts were found here, with Roman coins and horse and ox shoes bedded in them (Dony & Dyer 1975, 15, HER 353).

HER sites 1949,1977, 1978, 1979, 1980 and 2488, all outside but fairly close to the historic core, have yielded pottery or other artefacts of Roman date.

5.3 *The Anglo-Saxon Period (AD410 - AD1066)*

5.3.1 Pagan Cemeteries

The area around the later Biscot windmill may have been a focal point for early Saxon burial activity, perhaps due to the presence of a Neolithic long barrow here (HER 179). It sits on a chalk ridge, making it the highest point in the area (Hagen 1971). Excavations were carried out at Argyll Avenue (HER 178) in 1925, when trenches were cut for sewers. Several skeletons were found; one skull, two urns, an iron shield boss, two spear heads, small knife

and two disc brooches were recovered by Austin (1928, 33). It contained around forty inhumations and three cremations, and the grave goods included spears, swords, iron shield bosses and thirty-two brooches (Dony & Dyer 1975, 17). Further finds included three saucer brooches and "toilet trinkets" attached to a wire ring, of the early 6th century. The whole cemetery probably covered a large area, approximately 100m north of St Andrew's church to Biscot Mill. The pottery from the cemetery has been examined (Kennett 1973). The majority of dateable vessels are thought to come from the 5th century, though the cemetery is generally regarded as having an early 6th century date (Hagen 1971).

Around 500 yards NW of the Argyll Avenue graves, the 1923 construction of the new Montrose Avenue revealed several burials (HER 2842). Four adults were initially found, one with an iron spearhead and blade of an iron knife of 6th/7th century manufacture (Austin 1928, 33, c.f. Hagen 1971, 23). In 1937 during the building of St Margaret's Church, another three adults and one child were found. In 1950 a further burial of an adult was found, buried with an iron spearhead (Hagen 1971, 23). In 1959 during the construction of the Biscot Mill public house (on the site of the old Windmill) an adult male skeleton was found with no grave goods. A further adult male skeleton was found in 1970, with a hand-made pot and an iron arrowhead (*ibid.*). In total, 11 skeletons were found between 1923 and 1970. Another was discovered in 1991. This cemetery looks slightly later (7th century) and is probably separate from the one at Argyll Avenue.

In 1908 two 5th century female burials were found at Leagrave marsh, a few yards north of the Icknield Way, close to Waulud's Bank (HER 200). The grave goods included two disc brooches with iron pins, a gilt disc with openings (possibly an ornament on a bucket), and a pin with two spangles on one skeleton, and a pair of disc brooches on the other.

These discoveries are relevant to the general understanding of the historic core of Luton in the sense that they show the distribution of known traces of early Saxon activity within the surrounding area – though no such traces have been found within the historic core itself.

5.3.2   Roads
A possible Saxon (or earlier) road ran from Gallows Hill and Dray's Ditches through Bramlingham, Limbury, Leagrave, by Howe Down and Wingfield to Kateshill, where it crossed Watling Street three miles north of Dunstable. It was known as the Salt Way, as pack horses carried panniers of salt along it (Austin 1928, 40). Numerous flint artefacts have been found on its course and it is likely to be of prehistoric origin.

Peddar's Way is an ancient track running past Biscot windmill and up Montrose Avenue (Stockingstone Lane) by Cowridge to Round Green and thence to Dane Street in East Hyde (Austin 1928, 32).

The north-south road between Bedford and London was probably in existence by at least the late Saxon period, as were some of the main streets (George Street, Church Street, etc) of the settlement of Luton itself.

5.3.2 Settlement

The AD571 entry in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle suggests that the Romano-British settlement at Limbury continued in use into the 5th and 6th centuries, probably as part of a British rather than Anglo-Saxon territory.

By about the 8th century, the Anglo-Saxon settlement in the general area of Luton seems to have been in the form of a series of dispersed hamlets around the areas of Biscot, Leagrave, Hyde, Stapleford, Limbury and Brache. There may have been a settlement at "Lyg-tun" itself at this time.

The Saxon settlement at "Lyg-tun" or Luton was established by the 10th century, when the original church was built. The Victoria County History points to the present position of the town centre and St Mary's Church as evidence that the settlement occupied a piece of low ground close to the river Lea, offering convenient fording points over the River Lea (Page 1908, 348).

By the time of the Domesday Book, seven water mills were established in and around Luton, within the overall area of Luton manor. Two of these, Church Mill and North Mill were within or close to the town of Luton.

By the end of the 11th century, Luton could perhaps be characterised as a small town of timber and wattle and daub houses, congregating around the stone church and centred on what is now the Park Square area, with roads going down to the fording points or bridges over the River Lea.(Dony & Dyer 1975, 36). Potential evidence for some of these buildings may have been destroyed when the College of Technology was built. No traces of buildings of Saxon date have yet been found in the historic core of Luton itself. Equally, no traces of any defensive earthwork or boundary around the early town have yet been discovered.

5.3.3 Church

The Domesday Book records that Luton had a church at the time of the survey, which had existed in the previous reign, endowed with five hides of land. The church belonged to the royal manor of Luton, and was built upon the King's demesne. There is some discussion in the literature about whether the original church was situated somewhere other than its present location (Cobbe 1899, Austin 1928, Meadows 1975, Rogers 2000). Cobbe speculates that the Saxon church was situated near the chief manor house or farm (1899, 37-9). He conjectures that the location of the latter was at 'Bury Farm Homestead' (HER 12366), 'bury' being a term used to refer to a manor site during the medieval period. This would place the Saxon church and the chief manor of the parish some distance from the medieval town. It is perhaps more likely, however, that the footprint of the earliest wooden church is within or very close to the footprint of the present church.

Many authors suggest that the first stone church structure at Luton was built by either the prolific church-builder Edward the Elder, in thanks for his recovery of the royal estate at Luton from the Danes, or his successor Ethelstan. Certainly there is a general correspondence between the former cruciform design (and dedication) to that of St Mary's Church in Bedford, also associated with Edward the Elder. A carved stone corbel, found in the church and built into the inner doorway of the south porch in the 19th century, has been attributed to the Saxon period.

During the Anglo-Saxon period, Luton's priest, Morcar, owned a water mill by the church, which may account for the street name Pondswick here (Hamlyn 1963, 4). This stood on the eastern side of the churchyard, roughly opposite where Youth House is now (Dony and Dyer 1975)

5.3.4 The Danelaw
Under the terms of the 'Danelaw' treaty in AD878, Luton found itself right on the boundary. The manor of Luton was split by the treaty, the Danes taking over control of land on the eastern side of the river. The town of Luton itself may have been on the Saxon side of the frontier, but it was probably taken over by the Danes shortly after this.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle states that Luton was reclaimed from the Danes in AD917, by Edward the Elder.

5.4 The Medieval Period (AD1066 - AD1550)
It is difficult to gauge the extent of the medieval town, as there are so few buildings left from which to extrapolate the area of occupation. However, from information about demolished medieval buildings and the bridge, the location of the church, the former position of the guildhall and the location of the medieval market, it is reasonable to assume that medieval Luton occupied much the same position as the 18th century town as shown on Jeffrey's 1765 map. The area thought to have been covered by the medieval town is shown in Fig 4.

5.4.1 Fairs and Markets
The earliest reference to a market in Luton is in the Domesday Book, where it is described as bringing a revenue of 100s to the demesne manor of the king. The location of the market place was likely to have been in the Market Hill area, known as "Le Markethill", at the junction of Castle Street and George Street. The market had "Shambles", specially constructed stalls for the preparation sale of fish and meat, which were situated on Market Hill (LBC 1999). Part of the Shambles may yet be preserved beneath buildings on Market Hill between Chapel Street and Castle Street.

Earl Baldwin moved the weekly market from a Sunday to a Monday, sometime before 1202. In 1337 Hugh Mortimer (who by now owned a portion of Luton manor) applied for and obtained confirmation of his right to hold a weekly market and an annual fair, each three days long (Austin 1928). It is unclear where these were held; presumably they were separate events from the regular Monday market and annual fair of the Assumption. Portions of Luton

manor often had their own markets, but whether these were held in a different location to the weekly market is unknown.

The sheep market which was held on Sheep Street (Park Street) and the market for pigs held in Hog Lane (now Chapel Street) may have originated during the medieval period. Sheep are mentioned as being sold in the market in 1534 (CRO 130/11 X312/1)

5.4.2   Water mills

By the time of the Domesday survey, Luton was a well-established settlement, with a stone church, market and royal manor. It was also equipped with several mills; the Domesday Book records seven mills at Luton manor, one belonging to the church and the rest to the king (Dony & Dyer 1975, 35). These were spaced out along the seven miles of the Lea valley, from Leagrave to Hyde (see Fig 3). Only the North Mill (on Mill Street) and the Church Mill (HER 10819, TL 0952 2138) were situated within or close to the medieval core of the town. Church Mill stood close to the eastern side of St Mary's Church, its former mill pool perhaps accounting for the street name, "Pondswick" (Hamlyn 1963, 4). North Mill was working up to the mid 19th century but was demolished when the railway embankment was constructed.

5.4.3   Manors

Luton manor itself was a royal manor, one of the biggest in the county, at the time of the Domesday Survey. However, there were several manors surrounding and connected with Luton during this period, each following quite complicated descents. It is likely that these were subsidiary manors to the royal manor, which effectively provided the administrative centre for them all. For a detailed account of these, see the VCH (Page 1908). It is of some interest that the area of the royal manor probably very roughly corresponds to the area covered by the greatly expanded Luton of the 19th and 20th centuries, though additionally extending as far as Hyde.

Luton manor had six mills and a market worth 100s at the time of the Domesday survey (Page 1908: 350). The church and its lands also belonged to the manor (Austin 1914). It remained in the hands of the Crown until Henry I granted it to Robert, Earl of Gloucester *c.*1100-1147. The location of the manor house is not known. Cobbe (1899, 37-9) places it at the site of "Bury Farm Homestead", but this is not mentioned as a possible location by any other scholars.

Luton manor was passed by King John to Fulk de Breaute, who built a castle in the town in 1221. The site of the castle was on the south side of the church and covered most of the area from the church to Lea Road, SE of the Arndale Centre (Dony & Dyer 1975, 47). William Marshal recovered the manor from Fulk de Breaute in 1229, after which it fell to the six daughters of Isabel de Clare in 1274 and was split up into separate parts.

The actual location of the main manor house has been the subject of some discussion. It is likely, since churches and manors are often very closely

associated with each other, that it was once on the site of Fulk de Breaute's castle adjacent to the church (see Fig 5).

5.4.4 Church

The church of St Mary itself underwent significant alterations during the medieval period. Robert, Earl of Gloucester, who held the manor of Luton in 1121 from his father, Henry I, completely replaced the Saxon church in *c*. 1137 and built a new building on his own demesne land (though whether this implies a new site is open to question). He dedicated the new building to St Mary (Rogers 2000, 12, 15). This building was cruciform in design, though this shape could have been retained from the earlier church. If the new church was actually a rebuilding of the old, it could easily have been laid out on or aligned to the ground plan of the former building.

In 1139, King Stephen gave the manor and church of Luton to Robert de Waudari, one of his many hired mercenaries during the civil war. By the end of the 12th century, the north and south aisles of the present church were in place. In 1230, the chancel was extended eastwards to its present limit, and the transepts were probably also enlarged at this date.

The western tower was added to the church in the 14th century, replacing the old crossing tower. Arcades and new aisles were built on both sides, from the west side of the church to the crossing. The private chapels at the eastern end were added at this time, along with the lower story of the vestry, with its stone vault, and the north and south porches of the nave were also constructed

In about 1461, the east and north walls of the chapel, east of the north transept, were pulled down by Lord Wenlock and extended to reach the west wall of the vestry. He also pierced the wall into the chancel and inserted two arches. At this time, the rood stair was either built or altered, the four western bays of the north arcade were rebuilt, the clearstory was added, the upper storey of the vestry and the turret to it were built, and a small chantry was established by the vicar Richard Barnard. This is on the south wall, a small area entered through a set of three elaborate arches supporting groining and fine tracery. There is a piscina and niche for a brass towards the east end (for a fuller and more detailed discussion of the church architecture, see Page 1908).

The chequer-board pattern of flint and Totternhoe stone on the exterior of the church was originally intended to combat weathering (Dony & Dyer 1975, 67).

The will of Rev. John Penthelyn (d.1444) describes the rectory at Luton as having four rooms: a hall, pantry, kitchen and sleeping chamber (Dony & Dyer 1975, 73). The location of this building is not known.

5.4.5 Guild

The only guild in Luton for which evidence survives is the Guild of the Holy Trinity, although there may have been other small fraternities in the town associated with various trades. The Guild of the Holy Trinity was of a different type from the medieval fraternities established in connection with

crafts or trades, although both had the common purpose of providing for the singing of masses for the souls of dead brethren. The Hoo Chapel in St Mary's was probably originally the guild's chantry chapel (Dony & Dyer 1975, 71). The Guild of the Holy Trinity was purely a religious association. Many of its members were also of a high social standing and included kings, queens, bishops, abbots, priors and other religious superiors. The guildhall stood on Market Hill in Castle Street, where the Red Lion Hotel now stands (Hamlyn 1963, 19).

5.4.6 Chapels

St Mary's Church (HER 856) was the chief church in the town itself, although there were several other places of worship in the town hamlets, hospitals, or chapels attached to private manors (Hamlyn 1963, 7). For example, there was a hospital on Farley Moor, dating to the 12th century, another in Stopsley, founded in 1162 and a leper hospital in the hills between Limbury and Leagrave founded in 1287 (Hamlyn 1963, 7-8). Limbury itself had a chapel by 1220, and a field at Haverings named "Chapel Field" on the 1842 Tithe map may indicate a chapel in Stopsley, which had disappeared by the 16th century (Hamlyn 1963, 9).

A private chapel dedicated to St Anne was attached to the summer residence of the Abbot of St Albans near Hart Hill (HER 361, TL 102 213), and the lane from Park Square named "St Anne's Passage" recalls it.

5.4.7 Streets

In 1259, when a monk of St Albans described Luton as a "place abounding with parishioners, and richly endowed", the town layout was probably beginning to assume the crossroads plan which was a main feature of the 18th century town (Dony & Dyer 1975, 41). Mill Street is named after the Domesday water-mill which stood here. "Pondswyck" may also be named after the Church Mill here (see above). In 1470, "Le Markethill" is mentioned, as is Grane/Grave Close and Pygottes Crofte (CRO 130/11 X312/1).

Fig 13 shows the main medieval streets. Bridge Street must have been in place by this period to accommodate the medieval bridge at Horsepool. George Street, Church Street, Park Street, Castle Street and Dunstable Lane were in existence, but not necessarily known by those names. George Street was likely to have been known as High Street or North Street; Park Street was Common Street as far as Park Square from Market Hill, and beyond Park Square was South Street or Sheep Street (Dony & Dyer 1975).

5.4.8 Bridges

The main medieval bridge (HER 15715) was situated on Bridge Street, and was probably the most important of the Lea bridges, as it carried the main highway north of the town (Simco and McKeague 1997, 92). It is referred to as early as 1194-6 in the charter of Earl Baldwin de Betune. By 1526 it was referred to as "Norrebrigg" (*ibid*.).

There was also a smaller bridge at Church Street, and it is possible that this is actually the older of the crossing-points, situated as it is in the centre of the old town. A third crossing known as Blackwater Bridge existed on the eastern side of town, under the present A505 (Simco and McKeague 1997, 91).

5.4.9 Buildings

A fire in 1336 spread easily through the town, as most of the buildings were closely spaced and made out of wood with thatched roofs. The fire destroyed large parts of the town and left hundreds of families homeless, with 200 houses recorded as ruined even four years later, and 720 acres of land uncultivated (Dony & Dyer 1975, 59). The people of the town were excused tax payments as a result (Austin 1928, 149). This event did not help the survival of medieval buildings in the town. Burnt deposits relating to the fire may yet be discovered.

Except for St Mary's Church, there are no complete, extant examples of medieval buildings surviving in Luton. However, from the fragmentary evidence that is left and from information about the demolished examples, a picture of the nature and extent of Luton's late medieval buildings, especially public houses, can be gleaned.

In the town, at least ten large houses stood in George Street, Church Street, Park Street, Castle Street and Dunstable Lane. There was a mill house at the Church Mill at Pondwycs, and many "good sized farmhouses" occupied by yeomen farmers and maltsters. Up and down the streets between the farmhouses were the homes of shopkeepers, artisans and labourers (Austin 1928, 220). Around the town were open fields where each cottager held land and had the right to pasture sheep and cattle. By 1474 the town may have had as many as 60 malt kilns attached to farms or taverns (Dony & Dyer 1975, 83). Also built in stone would have been the tithe barn, the church and the guildhall.

A range of early 16th century buildings stood in "How's Yard", adjacent to the churchyard (Kennett 1976, 23). Adjacent to this stood the "Five Bells" public house, an early 16th century timber-framed building.

A possible early 16th century timber-framed house stands at 50 Park Street (Kennett 1976, 24).

Dunstable Lane (Upper George Street) had a timber-framed building on the northern side in about1500. On the southern side was "Peddar's House" dating to the early 16th century and timber-framed (Kennett 1976, 9). A farmhouse of c.1500 stood at the foot of Upper George Street until 1899. It was a jettied building, set at right angles to the street with gardens on either side (Kennett 1974, 3).

One of the only stone buildings from the medieval period to survive into the 19th century, other than St Mary's Church, was the tithe barn on Dunstable Road. Unfortunately this was demolished to make way for cottages in 1844 (Kennett 1974, 12).

The Old Bell Inn on George Street below the market area was one of the oldest inns in the town (Kennett 1974, 5). It is mentioned in a court roll 1470 as the "Bell", but presumably may date to earlier in the 15th century (Kennett 1976, 11). The buildings associated with the Bell covered the whole site of the northern side of Chapel Street between George Street and Stuart Street (Kennett 1974, 7). A map shows the layout of the gardens and stables (CRO X 1/37/1).

Adjacent to the Old Bell Inn, on the corner of Chapel Street and George Street, was the Windmill Inn, built in the late 15th or early 16th century (Kennett 1976, 11).

The 16th century Crown Inn stood where Park Square and Market Hill join (Kennett 1974, 9). It was timber-framed (Kennett 1976, 17) and some of this timber-framing has been incorporated into the 19th century building and is still visible inside the pub. Also on Market Hill was the "Shoulder of Mutton", a 16th century timber-framed building (Kennett 1976, 15). The medieval Shambles were partly preserved beneath the building, until the structure was replaced in 1837. Traces of the previous building may be preserved in the cellar, which is unfortunately inaccessible. The Red Lion Inn may incorporate early 16th century fragments.

On George Street, the George Inn itself was first recorded in 1509, although it could have been constructed earlier, possibly 1400-1450 (Kennett 1976, 12). It was originally a timber-framed building. The site is now occupied by modern shops. Also on George Street was another timber-framed building (HER 13963) dating to the 16th century with a probable 15th century hall (Smith 1972). Next door to this, a large 19th century hat manufacturer's warehouse replaced a 16th century building (Kennett 1976, 13)

A late 15th century/early 16th century inn, the "Wheel Plough", stood on the lower part of Park Street on the northeast side (Kennett 1976, 24). The "Ramshead" which stood on Park Street was known from 1537 (Kennett 1976, 25).

The Abbot of St Albans, Robert de Gorham, built a summer residence on St Anne's Hill, now Hart Hill (HER 361), SW of Rutland Street. It had its own chapel dedicated to St Anne. This 12th century stone-built structure was demolished in 1689 (Dony & Dyer 1975, 42).

For a map of historic buildings in Luton, see Fig 15.

HER no	Address	Comments
856	St Mary's Church, Church Street	Mainly 13th to 15th century
10302	Red Lion Hotel, Market Hill/Castle Street	16th century timber-framed portion?

Table 1. Surviving medieval buildings

5.4.10 Castles

Although no castle was built at Luton during the reign of William the Conqueror, perhaps because the town was a royal estate, two separately sited castles were built in the 12th and 13th centuries respectively.

Robert de Waudari, the foreign mercenary to whom King Stephen granted the church and manor of Luton, set about building a castle in the area of Castle Street. It was probably a wooden structure on a motte (HER 186, Dony & Dyer 1975, 40). Although short-lived (it was pulled down in 1154) this structure was substantial. Excavations in 1963 for the *Luton News* found the 3-4 m wide ditch which had surrounded the bailey. Further excavations in 2002 by Thames Valley Archaeological Service also located this ditch. The motte would probably have been on the site of the former bus garage. It is possible that the line of Castle Street itself preserves the course of the inner ditch which separated the motte from the bailey.

Fulk de Breaute's castle was built when he acquired Luton manor in the 1221 (HER 185). It stood on the south side of the church and covered most of the area from there to Lea Road. The river formed its boundary on the east side, and its western extent is approximately where the College of Technology stands. A substantial mound of earth still covered this area in the beginning of the 20th century. The moat bounded the south side of the churchyard (Dony & Dyer 1975, 47-48).

For locations of both castles see Fig 5.

5.4.11 Hospitals

In 1156 Henry II gave some land from Luton manor to monks from Wissant to build a hospital and chapel on Farley Hill dedicated to St John the Baptist (HER 184). The building was on Farley Farm road and constituted a travellers' resting place (Dony & Dyer 1975, 43). Farley Hospital was leased by Henry VI in 1445 to his new foundation, King's College, Cambridge. It probably didn't disappear until the dissolution of smaller religious houses under Edward VI (Austin 1928, 180).

Thomas Beckett founded a hospital in about 1165 for the sick on a hill between the Vauxhall factory and the airport, close to the site of the former Spittlesea Isolation Hospital (HER 362; Dony & Dyer 1975, 44). It was dedicated to St Mary Magdalene. This hospital was in need of support in 1465, when a licence to collect alms for it was obtained by the local gentry. When its foundations were discovered in the early 19th century, it was revealed to be surrounded by a square ditch, with rubble and rough flint walls (Currie 1982, 6). The foot of a stone column from the building is in Luton Museum.

In 1285 the manor court book mentions a hospital of St John the Baptist at Luton (HER 188), which contained, or was exclusively for the treatment of, lepers (Dony & Dyer 1975, 57). It may have stood on Spital Hill between Leagrave and Limbury, near the site of Norton Road, well outside town, and was possibly associated with a chapel at Limbury (Currie 1982, 8).

A Pest House is indicated on the 1842 Tithe map by the presence of "Pest House Mead", "Pest House Piece" and "Pest House Common" (HER 12363). Pest houses were a form of isolation hospital, usually situated well away from the town. Its location was probably some way from the town to the NW.

5.4.12 Trades

It is safe to assume that the majority of the medieval population was engaged in some form of agricultural activity. Particularly important was sheep farming, for wool rather than meat (Dony & Dyer 1975, 87). The sheep market held on Sheep Street (now Park Square and part of George Street) is likely to have originated in the late Saxon period. However, some other occupations mentioned for the people of Luton include regrator of ale (seller of ale, in this case with unfair profit), common brewer, fuller, servant, miller, etc.

The presence of professions connected to brewing and the selling of ale, as opposed to the production of beer for private consumption, reflects the economic importance of malting, which was to grow until the 19th century. The town probably held as many as 60 malt-kilns by 1474 (Dony & Dyer 1975, 83).

Brickmaking became an important industry in Luton during the late medieval period. The earliest mention of the industry comes in 1541 (Cox 1979, 13) when Barnard Spayne attempted to manufacture bricks and tiles on a large scale (Austin 1928, 236). The nearby Someries Castle (the Wenlock house as opposed to the earlier structure) may be one of the oldest upstanding brick buildings in the country, dating to 1448 (Cox 1979, 11) and it is possible that the bricks were of local manufacture (Austin 1928, 187). Kilns may have been established in Luton at this time.

5.5 The Post-Medieval Period (AD1550 – AD1850)

Luton's main period of growth did not occur until 1800 onwards (compare Figs 6-9). Until then, it was typical of many small towns of rural England: a focal point for the surrounding villages to take their produce to market (Kennett 1976, 2). A total of 15,435 acres of farmland belonged to Luton in 1801 (Kennett 1974, 1) and it was largely over this area that the town later expanded. The township was described at that date by Gough as a "long, dirty market town of one street, meanly built and forking like a Y from the market place, and then again to the church north, and by a pond south to Lord Bute's house, which is about a mile from the town" (Kennett 1974, 1). In around 1800, 2,000 people were living in the town. The town's population was first accurately recorded in 1821 as 2,986 people (Kennett 1976, 3). Between 1785 and 1805, the survival rate of children doubled; out of every 10 children born, 8 or 9 would live (CRT 130/10/1922). In 1801, Luton had a population of around 3,000 (CRT 130/10/1922).

5.5.1 Market

During this period, there is no evidence that the market changed its position. In 1702, the stocks were moved from the churchyard gates and set up in the market place (Austin 1914). Francis Blomfield, writing in 1724 and 1734,

mentions Luton's market house and Monday corn market (Austin 1928, 80). The market house stood on Market Hill and was later replaced by the Gothic style Corn Exchange. By 1804, there was a market for sheep in Park Street and one for pigs in Hog Lane (now Chapel Street). Both of these may have had earlier antecedents. The market place was a bone of contention in the town at the start of the 19th century. It was unpaved, undrained and flanked on one side by tenements called "Middle Row", which presumably got in the way. Like the Market House, Middle Row was later pulled down to make way for the Corn Exchange.

5.5.2 Fairs

Established fairs were held on 18th April and 18th October (St Luke's day). New ones were established on 25th April (St Mark's day) and 25th October (Hockliff directory 1785). An annual Statute fair was held in September, for pleasure and hiring servants (Austin 1914). This may have been established during the reign of Elizabeth I.

5.5.3 Manor

At the beginning of this period, Luton manor was held by the Rotherham family. There is still no evidence for the location of the manor house. It was sold to Sir Robert Napier in 1611 (Page 1972, 45). It then became united with Luton Hoo, which he also owned by this time. It remained in the Napier family until 1763-4 when it was sold to the earl of Bute. It was sold by the earl's great grandson to Mr Ward in 1844 (*ibid*.).

5.5.4 Church

William Camden visited the church in 1586 and reported seeing the choir roofless and overgrown with weeds, perhaps due to the fact that since the dissolution of St Albans Abbey it was unclear whose responsibility it was to make repairs. The choir was made good in 1603 (Dony & Dyer 1975, 86).

A "free chapel" to St Anne (possibly the chapel attached to the Bishop's summer residence) was described as destroyed and devastated in 1571 (Cobbe 1899, 570).

Non-conformist churches began appearing during this period; see Table 3. A man reflecting how Luton had altered over his lifetime in 1848 described changes to the town (CRT 130/44/6615: Letters to Bedfordshire Times). He mentions an increase in Methodists and describes their Meeting House next to the church as an eight-sided roof with a "golden ball".

Description	Date	Comments
Friend's Meeting House, Castle Street (HER 8503)	1800	
Union Baptist Chapel, Chapel Street	1836-44	
Ceylon Baptist Chapel, Wellington Street (HER 10411)	1848	
Primitive Methodist Chapel, Hitchin Road (HER 12388)	Shown on Tithe 1842	Demolished by 1983
Methodist Chapel, Midland Road Station	Shown on Tithe 1842	Now under Midland Road Railway Station

Table 2. Non-conformist churches

5.5.5 Dissolution

The dissolution of the monasteries meant that all hospitals, guilds and chantries became the property of King Edward VI. At Luton, this meant the dissolution of the Guild of the Holy Trinity (Dony & Dyer 1975, 85).

Of the two hospitals outside of the town, Farley Hospital was given by Edward VI to one of his knights, Thomas Palmer, but it was restored to the Rotheram family in 1554. In 1579, Elizabeth I permitted the property to be split up and at this date the buildings were probably demolished. The Hospital of St John the Baptist, founded as a leper hospital, may have suffered a similar fate, but little is known of it, physically or historically (Currie 1982, 5).

5.5.6 Streets

For the majority of this period, Luton continued to have one principal thoroughfare, High Street/Sheep Street, now called George Street/Park Street. Castle Street, Church Street and Shop Row are also mentioned in 1785, along with Blackwater, Hog and Louse Lanes (CRT 130/10/1922). Tower Hill was so-called by 1602. Minor lanes and passages included Buck's Way, Berry Lane and Cradle Field Lane, all mentioned in the Luton manor court book, 1732-87 (CRT 130/11 X312/1). The same document indicates that several tollgates were in place in the mid 18th century. One is mentioned at "town's end" in 1736, and in 1749, a gate was set up in Wrestcroft Field leading to Bramingham Lane "through which Tithes were fetched for the manor". A turnpike road is also mentioned at Burh Hill and one was set up at the bridge over the Lea in the 18th century (CRT 130/27/4656). Park Square had a pond in the middle, called Cross Pond, and Long Pond occupied the lower part of Park Street, running as far as the corner of Lea Road (Dony & Dyer 1975, 102).

By examining the 1765 sketch by Jeffreys, the 1815 sketch by Martha Higgins, and the 1842 Tithe map (MAT 30/1/1 & 2), a general impression of the evolution of the town's street system can be gained. The 1815 map shows little difference with Jeffreys 1765 map; George Street, Park Street, Church Street, Langley Street, Castle Street, Bridge Street, Hog Lane, Blackwater Lane, Love Lane, Dallow Lane, Dunstable Road, Old Bedford Road, Hitchin Road, London Road, Farley Road and Langley Road are all shown. Jeffrey's map does not show Langley Street or Langley Road. The 1842 Tithe map

shows New Town Street, Windsor Street, Dumfries Street, Buaton Road and New Bedford Road. Wellington Street is just beginning to appear at its junction with George Street. Bute Street and Guildford Street are also shown.

Much of what is now central Luton was farmland until 1839. Park Square's northern side was reconstructed in 1831. Bute Street was laid out in the 1840s, partly across farmland, and the area at the foot of Wellington Street (laid out 1823) was very agricultural in nature. Wellington Street runs across an area known as a farm in 1804 (Hamlyn 1963, 35). Upper George Street with its extensive malt-kiln, was the limit of the township (Kennett 1974, 2). The other side of Upper George Street (i.e. that not occupied by the malt kiln) was filled with farm buildings and labourers' cottages. In 1804, farm buildings occupied the site of the town hall (Kennett 1974, 3).

A description of Luton from 1821 gives some impression of the character of the new development as the expansion related to the hat industry took off: "We returned home by the side of the Lea on a very pretty road and passed many cottages. Some of them looked dirty and wretched … all the inhabitants appear to be employed in plaiting straw…" (CRT 130/39/5741: Extracts from journal of Elizabeth Read, aged 18).

A letter to the local newspaper (CRT 130/44/6615: Letters to Bedfordshire Times) described new development. One could previously walk to Stopsley via Seven Acres, which skirted the town on the northern side of the river, but now (1848) it was "an immense mass of brickwork" known as Donkey Hall. The pathway from Barber's Lane over the meadows here had been widened to a great thoroughfare for access. The letter also mentions the new street names: Bute Street, Wellington Street, Stuart Street and Hastings Street.

5.5.7 Bridges

Until 1797, the road from Bedford crossed the river by a ford at "Horsepool", the medieval bridge presumably having gone into disrepair. Then two brick bridges were built and the road raised by 2.1m (Simco 1997, 92; Kennett 1974, 3). One of the two streams that flowed here was the leat for the North water-mill (Simco and Mckeague1997, 92). The contract and drawings of two 1838 replacements for these bridges survive and provide some insight into the construction techniques used at the time (the bridges have since been destroyed by floods and the river built over).

The course of the river near the church was altered in 1799. Previously, the river had flowed in two streams over the road at the bottom of Church Street with a raised path and a plank serving as a footbridge (Austin 1928, 96). The course was diverted to run over the corner of Hitchin Road.

In 1799, this road from Hitchin was also raised and given a bridge at the foot of Church Street (Kennett 1974, 3), though it should be noted that some sort of crossing had existed here before. Next to these bridges in 1804 were tan yards, some of the few industrial buildings of Luton in 1800.

5.5.8 Buildings

Luton's population nearly doubled between 1841 and 1851 (CRT 130/10/1922). The increase in population led to a demand for extra housing. In 1850, the chief employment of the town's inhabitants had switched from agriculture to the manufacture of straw bonnets and hats. These workers lived in houses with no proper drainage or water supply. Industrial water mixed with well water, causing widespread illness and fever - the cause of a public investigation by the General Board of Health (CRO 130//4579).

Extant post-medieval buildings which pre-date the 19th century are few (see Fig 15), but many of the demolished examples have been discussed by Kennett, based on photographic evidence (1976). Taken together with the standing remains, these give a good idea of the character of the post-medieval town, as it was prior to the 19th century.

Luton was well-equipped with inns and taverns during this period (see below), reflecting the fact that the brewing and sale of beer and spirits is the main continuous trade carried out in Luton and south Bedfordshire, prior to the straw plait industry (LBC 1999). In 1785 there were at least the "George", the "Old Red Cow", the "Red Lion", the "Cross Keys", the "Five Bells", the "Ram's Head", the "Plough", the "Vine", the "White Hart" (HER 10299), and the "White Horse" (CRT 130/10/1922). A list from 1804 would add the "Horse and Jockey", the "Fox", the "Shoulder of Mutton" and the "Dog" (CRT 130/27/4656). However, few of the original buildings are extant, although the site of many is known. The Old Red Cow, demolished in 1830, was a 17th century building situated on the NW side of the Bridge Street bridge (Kennett 1976, 7). Opposite this was the "Duke's Head" on Tower Hill, first recorded in 1643, with attached houses and plots stretching down to the river (op.cit.: 8). Also on Tower Hill was the "Horse and Jockey", another 17th century Inn (Kennett 1974, 5).

In 1804, Tower Hill had a maltings and almshouses, dating respectively to 1602 and 1637. Edward Vaughan gave three messuages in 1602 on Tower Hill to trustees for the accommodation and maintenance of poor persons. These cottages were situated near Manchester Street. How the name Tower Hill came into being is not known (Austin 1928, 5). In 1637 Sir Robert Napier left four cottages on Tower Hill for the poor of Luton (Dony & Dyer 1975, 87). It is unclear whether these were the same buildings or not. Eventually, Tower Hill almshouses consisted of 27 cottages built on the site of seven former tenements (Kennett 1976, 7)

A late 17th century brick house stands on the northern side of Upper George Street. On the southern side, the "Clarence" pub, formerly the"Two Brewers" inn is older than 1771 (Kennett 1976, 10). The Old Bell during this period is recorded as having 14 hearths in 1671. It was rebuilt after a flood in 1828 and given a brick front (Kennett 1976, 11).

The George Inn on George Street was refronted in 1800/1820 and demolished in 1834 (Kennett 1976, 12). Next door to the George, a large hat manufacturer's warehouse of c.1842-1855 replaced a 16th century building. In

1818 the Marquis of Bute took down farmhouses in George Street and created the Brache and Bury farm buildings (Hamlyn 1963, 35).

On Market Hill's northeast side stood a large 17th century inn "The Star", part of which became the "Plough" in the 1830s (Kennett 1976, 13). The southeast side is mainly 19th century rebuilding, although the Crown Inn is older (Kennett 1976, 14). Also, the "Shoulder of Mutton" became two private houses in the 18th century, and was sold to a brewer in 1786, finally demolished in 1837. It stood on the corner of Chapel and George Street (Kennett 1976, 15).

In 1706, the "King's Arms" formerly the "Halfmoon" is recorded as having stood on Market Hill and represents late 16th century infilling of the area of the Market Place (Kennett 1976, 16). The Market House is shown in an engraving of 1775, probably soon after it was built, replacing an earlier structure. It was demolished in 1867 to make way for the Corn Exchange (Kennett 1976, 17).

Castle Street was once a very narrow alley between two buildings (Kennett 1976, 18). Pyke's Maltings (now demolished) stood here, dated 1783, on the west side beside Castle Ditches Close (Kennett 1976, 18). The former Brotherhood House of the Guild of the Holy Trinity stood on the site of the present Red Lion. Two inns were built over part of their property opposite this site - the Lion (predecessor of the White Hart and not the Red Lion) and the Cross Keys (Kennett 1976, 19).

Park Square, delineating the buildings between the Market Place and Park Street, had two inns dating to somewhere in the 16th century: "Vinecocks" and the "White Hart" (not to be confused with the White Hart above). Vinecocks ceased to be an inn in the 17th century and the present building dates to 1804. The White Hart ceased to be an inn in 1732 (Kennett 1976, 21). Park Square also had a brick-fronted timber framed house at no.16. This was built in 1748 for a baker and maltster of the town, Daniel Brown (Kennett and Smith 1988, 81).

Many early 18th century buildings in Church Street were demolished when the car park for the Arndale Centre was built (Kennett 1976, 23). Cottages on St Anne's Lane dating to 1745 were built on the site of a former malting. Park Street West was laid out in 1847 or after. The parish workhouse was moved here in 1765 after the closure of the former Langley mansion. The earliest documentation for the Cock Inn (HER 10383) on Park Street is 1650 (Kennett 1976, 24).

In front of the former Park Street Baptist chapel was a timber-framed building dated 1689. A 17th century fragment may exist on Cumberland Street. The "Ramshead", which had stood on the SW side of Park Street had seven hearths in 1671 (Kennett 1976, 25).

The College of Technology site on Park Street was a brewery in 1767 with the "White House" next to it. The Wheel Plough Inn on Park Street had its own brewery dating to 1655, as did the Old English Gentleman on the corner of

Burr Street and Hitchin Road, built 1840. The prolific brewing family, the Burrs, built the Shoulder of Mutton on Market Hill and The Bell on George Street. The Crown and Anchor, built 1849, which stood on New Bedford Road had a brewery attached to it (Kennett 1974, 4). Park Street Baptist Church was built in 1698 until it was replaced in 1814 (HER 8485).

Unlawfully built buildings are mentioned near the tollgate and on the lord's waste (CRT 130/11 X 312/1 1732-1787).

In 1844, cottages were built on the site of the medieval Tithe barn (Kennett 1974, 12).

In the early 1800s, a model farm was erected at the site now covered by Vauxhall motors (HER 15586).

HER no	Address	Comments
10431	111 Butterfield, Green Road	17th century, timber-framed, thatched roof
10381	Brewery Tap PH, 22 Park Street	17th century timber-framed
10383	The Cock PH, 38 Park Street	17th century timber-framed
9980	16 Park Street	c.1740, 17th century timber-framed rear
8502	Wesleyan Chapel, Church Street	Built 1778
6543	1 George Street (Nickel Bag PH)	Late 18th century/early 19th century façade
8503	Friends Meeting House, Castle Street	Built 1800
9981	18 & 20 Park Street	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10089	4-8 Castle Street	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10327	6 George Street West	Early 19th century, brick
10328	8-10 George Street West	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10329	Wheelwright's Arms PH, 34 Guildford Street	Early 19th century façade to possibly earlier building, Luton grey brick
10336	The Mitre PH, 2 High Town Road	Early 19th century, Luton grey brick
10337	Hatter's Arms PH, 2 High Town Road	mid 19th century, brick
10345	Station House, Midland Road, High Town	mid 19th century, plaster façade
10297	The Cooper's Arms PH, 55 Bute Street	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10299	The White Hart PH, 1 Castle Street	mid 19th century stucco
10300	3-5 Castle Street	No.3 mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10301	9 Castle Street	Early 19th century, brick
10304	9 Chapel Street, "The Bitter End" PH	Early 19th century, brick
10316	25 George Street	Early to mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10324	11-19 George Street West	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick

10305	75-87 Chapel Street	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10310	45-55 Dumfries Street	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10314	21 George Street	mid 19th century, stucco
8063	7 Park Square	19th century, brick
8064	9-11 Park Square	19th century, brick
8065	13 Park Square	19th century, brick
8066	15-17 Park Square	19th century, brick
8067	19 Park Square	19th century, brick
8068	21 Park Square	19th century, brick
8069	21a Park Square	19th century façade to earlier building
8070	1 & 3 Bute Street	19th century, stucco
8071	5-9 Bute Street	19th century, brick
8072	11 Bute Street	19th century, brick
8074	14 Bute Street	19th century, brick
8075	1 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8076	3 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8078	17A & 19A Cheapside	19th century, brick
8079	19 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8080	21-19 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8081	33 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8082	49 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8083	53 Cheapside	19th century, brick, former hat factory?
8084	55 Cheapside	19th century, stucco
8085	57 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8086	59 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8087	61 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8088	63 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8089	65 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8090	45 Guildford Street	19th century, brick
8091	22-24 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8092	26 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8093	42 & 44 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8094	32 George Street	19th century, stucco
8095	1-6 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8096	8 Cheapside	19th century, brick
8097	10 Cheapside	19th century, brick
10370	7 Oxford Road	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10371	9-15 Oxford Road	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10373	10-12 Oxford Road	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10374	2-4 Park Street	Early 19th century
10384	68-72 Park Street	mid 19th century, brick/stucco
10385	100 Park Street	mid 19th century, brick
10386	97-99 Park Street	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10387	101 Park Street	c.1840, Luton grey brick

10388	103-107 Park Street	mid 19th century
10389	109-113 Park Street	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10394	27-33 Park Street West	1840-45, Luton grey brick
10401	80-82 Wellington Street	mid 19th century
10402	84-96 Wellington Street	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10403	152 Wellington Street	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10405	35-45 Wellington Street	mid 19th century
10406	53 Wellington Street /24 Stuart Street	mid 19th century, brick
10409	117-129 Wellington Street	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10410	106 Wellington Street	mid 19th century, Luton grey brick
10411	Ceylon Baptist Church, Wellington Street	1848

Table 3.   Surviving post-medieval buildings

The number of 19th century houses constructed from local brick reflects the importance of the brick-making industry, "symbiotically" related to the great period of unregulated house building caused by the hat making industry prior to *c*.1850. The hat industry and its effect on the town are discussed separately, below.

5.5.9   Trade

Until the rapid growth of Luton's size and population in the mid 19th century, the majority of people were engaged in agriculture (CRT 130/10/1922). Leland mentions Luton's famous barley market in the early 16th century (Page, 1972, 349). The fact that the church was said to be in disrepair a generation later may point to Luton sharing the decline in prosperity experienced by many 16th century agricultural towns.

From the 16th century onwards, malting, milling and brewing were the main industries in the town, and malt kilns were found attached to many taverns and inns (Kennett 1974, 4). Luton's most important brewery was begun in this period. In 1767 a house and brewery on the east side of Park Street between St Anne's Lane and Church Street were acquired by Thomas Burr (Austin 1928, 80). The business became very prosperous and was sold to Thomas Sworder in 1857.

In the township, the professions of the occupants in 1785 included:

    Apothecary
    Attorney (x2)
    Draper (x3)
    Fellmonger
    Plumber
    Hat-manufacturer
    Surgeon
    Watchmaker
    Maltsters (multiple)

Constable (x7)

(CRT 130/10/1922)

For other trades, see Table 4.

Apothecary, Samuel Chase	Grocer, Thomas Alsop
Brewer, Thomas Godfrey Burr	Glazier/Plumber, Charles Sherlock
Carpenter/Auctioneer, Robert Hill	Hat manufacturer, Williamson and son
Carrier/Ironmonger, John Freeth	Maltster, John Prior
Draper, John Shapr	Maltster/Mealman, Joseph Brown
Woolstapler, John Hay	Maltster/Miller, Daniel Brown
Fellmonger, Robert Barton	Surgeon, Robert Kirby
Flaxdresser/sackmaker, Francis Nash	Watchmaker/Brasier, Daniel Field

Table 4. Professions from Hockliff's directory 1785

Thirteen medical men are recorded in Luton in the 18th century, contrasting with only one in 1669 (CRT 130/49/8257).

There is also evidence for tanning; a tanyard is mentioned by the river in the court book of Luton manor 1732 – 87 (CRT 130/11 X312/1). The same document mentions a messuage near the markethouse which was a blacksmith's converted to a butcher's shop.

The introduction of the manufacture of straw plait came in the 17th century (Page, 1972, 349). In 1724, Luton's House of Maintenance for the Poor instructed inmates in plaiting and hat making (Bunker 1993, 48) perhaps reflecting the already important status of the craft to the town. Daniel Defoe (1724) described the manufacture of straw work as having greatly increased within a few years past (Bunker 1993, 49).

The variety of professions in the town was to drastically increase by 1804, even before Luton's main period of expansion in the mid 19th century. See Table 5 (CRT 130/27/4656).

Auctioneer	Cooper	Parish Clerk	Tinman
Baker	Farmer	Pew opener	Upholsterer
Barber	Flax dresser	Pig dealer	Watchmaker
Basket maker	Grocer	Plait jobber	Weaver
Blacksmith	Grave digger	Schoolmaster	Wheelwright
Breeches maker	Haberdasher	Shoemaker	Whip maker
Bricklayer	Justice of the Peace	Surgeon	Whitesmith
Butcher	Maltster	Tailor	Wood stainer
Carpenter	Mealman	Tallow candle	Workhouse keeper
Collar maker	Miller	Tanner	Draper

Table 5. Professions in 19th century Luton

In Piggot's 1839 directory entries for Luton, this list has increased further. See Table 6.

Academic	Fishmonger	White & lock-smith
Estate Agent	Fruiterer	Bell hanger
Agricultural implement maker	Furniture Broker	Wine & spirit merchant
Attorney	Grocer	Woolstapler
Auctioneer	Hair dresser	Glove & legging maker
Baker	Ironmonger	Surgeon
Banker	Joiner	Wheelwright
Basket Maker	Carpenter	Shopkeeper
Blacksmith	Linen, wool and silk draper	Stone & marble maker
Block Maker	Livery stable keeper	Hat manufacturer
Mill Maker	Machine maker	Tailor
Boot/shoe Maker	Maltster	Tallow Chandler
Brazier	Merchant	Timber merchant
Coppersmith	Milliner	Toy dealer
Tin-plate worker	Music teacher	Wood turner
Brewer	Nursery/seedsman	Veterinary surgeon
Brick/tile maker	Plumber	Watch/clock maker
Lime burner	Glazier	Wheelwrights
Bricklayer	Rope maker	Corn miller
Plasterer	Sack manufacturer	Currier and leather cutter
Butcher	Saddler	Fire and office agent (insurer)
China/Glass dealer	Collar maker	Cooper
Chemist	Coal Merchant	Corn measure maker
Clothes dealer	Confectioner	Corn merchant dealer
Coach Builder		

Table 6.   1839 Professions from Piggot's directory

Brickmakers are recorded in Luton in the first half of the 17th century (Cox 1979, 13). A tile kiln is mentioned at Farley in a settlement made by Thomas Rotherham in 1666. A manuscript calendar mentions in 1623 that Robert Browne of Luton was a brickmaker (CRT 130/57/9548). Nineteenth century kilns and pits are listed in Table 7 (see Cox 1979, 42-88).

Location	Date operating
South of Dallow Road, between recreation ground and Lyndhurst Road	Late 19th century
East side of Dunstable Road near junction with Cardigan Street	*c*. 1830-1854
Between London and Tennyson Roads	1834-*c*.1879
East side of London Road, south of Cutenhoe Road	*c*.1826-*c*.1879
East side of Old Bedford Road on site of Frederick, Reginald and William Streets	Late 19th century
North-west of Mixes Hill, Round Green, on site of Sunningdale	Late 19th century
Near junction of Hart Lane and Crawley Green Road	Late 19th century

**Table 7. 19th century kilns and pits**

5.5.10 Schools and Education

Provision for the education of anyone below the higher echelons of society is not well attested during this period. In 1673, a barber-surgeon left money for the education of a disadvantaged child. In 1685, Roger Gillingham left money for the provision of a schoolmaster. A will of 1731 mentions a "Church School", and one of 1736 mentions a "Free School" in Luton. In the 18th century, St Anne's Lane, which currently runs on the south side of the College of Technology and from Park Street to the churchyard, was known as "School Walk". This may relate to the Church School, but it is not known for how long a school was held in the church. In 1809 a school was built in Park Square on land given by the Marquess of Bute (Dony 1970, 9, 11).

5.6 The Industrial Period (AD1850 - AD1914)

The graph below gives an impression of the huge growth in population experienced over the last two hundred years.
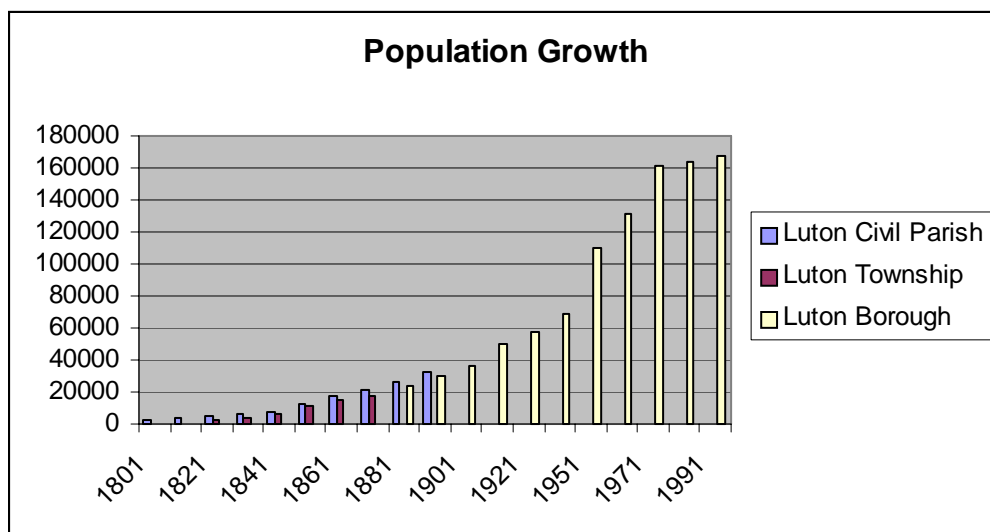
5.6.1 Population

The growth experienced by Luton during this period was extraordinary, as shown by figures from the census data 1801-1991 (BLARS).

5.6.2 Market

By 1885, there were markets held every Monday and Saturday, the former for the sale of cattle, corn and straw plait, and the latter for other provisions. Two annual cattle fairs were held in April and October. A fair for hiring servants in September was abolished during this period (Kelly's directory 1885). The Market House on Market Hill was demolished in 1868 and replaced with the Corn Exchange (demolished in 1951). The plait market was then held within the plait halls on Cheapside and Waller Street, built in 1868.

5.6.3 Church

In 1865 to 1885, St Mary's Church underwent a complete restoration by G E Street (Page 1972, 368). The east wall of the chancel was rebuilt, the outside face of the walls and the window tracery were renewed and new doorways in the south wall of the Hoo Chapel and west wall of the tower were inserted.

Additional alterations of the last 150 years include the 1907 repair of the tower and re-facing of the buttresses and the raising of the chancel floor. The Barnard Chapel retains the original floor level, 21 inches below (Page, 1972, 369). Much of the external chequer board pattern of Totternhoe stone and flints is modern.

The growing population of the town and its rapid physical growth meant that St Mary's soon became inadequate to serve 19th century Luton's needs, particularly as a strong non-conformist element now lived in the town - mainly in the newly built areas associated with the hat industry, such as High Town. See Table 9 (CRT 130/52/9031).

Church	Date	Comments
St Saviour's, Russell Street (HER 10395)	1877-1905	Local brick
Christ Church, Upper George Street (HER 1678)	1856	Independent parish in 1860
High Town Methodist Church, High Town Road (HER 10338)	1859	
Waller Street Wesleyan Church (HER 8499)	1863	Closed in 1954
Wesleyan Chapel, North Street (HER 12386)	c. 1863	Demolished by 1983
Park Street Baptist Church (HER 8485)	1870	Replaced octagonal chapel of 1814, demolished in 1976
Ebenezer Chapel, Hastings Street (HER10344)	c. 1870s	
Wesleyan Chapel, Albert Road (HER 12387)	c. 1872	Demolished by 1983
Havelock Road, High Town, Mission Church, later, St Matthew (HER 10412)	1875	Mission church was wooden, St Matthew's replaced it
Bethel Baptist Chapel, Chapel Street (HER 10307)	1876	Rebuilt in 1906
New Town, St Paul	1890	Local brick
Mount Tabor Methodist Church, Castle Street (HER 15332)	1897	Adjacent cottages demolished 1900 for Sunday School
Gardenia Avenue, St Joseph	1958-60	
Carteret Road, St Francis	1959-60	1977, separate parish formed
North Street Advent Church, North Street (HER 10519)	1913	Luton grey brick
Shaftesbury Road, All Saints (HER 10520)	1922-3	Made a separate parish
Blenheim Crescent, St Andrew (HER 10466)	1931-2	
Round Green, St Christopher (HER 6542)	1936-7	Chancel built 1959, parish formed 1951-2
Hart Lane/Crawley Green Road, St Anne	1938	New parish from St Mary in 1977
Grange/Dallow Road, St Peter	1913	Demolished 1963

Table 9. 19th/early 20th century chapels and churches

5.6.4 Trams

Luton's trams opened on 21st February 1908. In all, 12 trams ran throughout the town. The last tram ran in 1932 (Stubbs 1997).

5.6.5 Railways

In 1855, Luton was producing manufactured goods amounting to £2 million sterling p.a. This, coupled with a population of 16,000 or upwards and the fact that around 40,000 people involved in the manufacture of straw hats and bonnets lived around Luton within a radius of 5/6 miles, precipitated the need for a railway (CRT 130/28/4658).

The station was built at Seven Acres at the top of Bute Street. The Midland Railway had warehouses on Bute Street (HER 6906).

The chronology of railway development was as follows:
- 1858 – Dunstable to Luton line opened
- 1860 – Line to Welwyn junction built
- 1861 – Dunstable North station built (Luton's main London link)
- 1868 – Midland Railway extension to London
- 1965 – Welwyn line closed

5.6.6 Streets

A comparison of the 1842 Tithe map and the 1st and 2nd edition OS maps of Luton gives a good impression of the expansion of the street system in the second half of the 19th century (Figs 7 and 9). This expansion included the development of areas specifically related to the hat making industry. Waller Street was not in existence in 1860, but it is shown on a map of 1876 (CRO Z175/366). Buildings here were for entertainment, education, medication and worship (Mears 1971). Growth in New Town and High Town occurred in 1851 (Craddock 1999).

The 1887 1st edition and 1901 2nd edition OS maps show that numerous new streets were laid out, particularly to the east and west of the town (see Figs 9, 10 and 13). This changed the nature of the town considerably. The High Town area, comprising of Burr Street, Duke Street, Brunswick Street, Taylor Street, York Street and Cobden Street is shown. North-west of this, Dudley Street, North Street, Wenlock Street and Havelock Road are shown. Between the two forks of what is now called Upper George Street and Manchester Street, Liverpool Road, Inkerman Street and Alma Street have been laid out. Collingdon Street links Dunstable Road to Manchester Street. South-west of George Street between Stuart Street and Langley Street are King Street, George Street West, Park Street West, Cumberland Street, Chobham Street and Peel Street. Adelaide Street and Princes Street are shown west of Wellington Street. Wellington Street extends SW to meet Windsor Street. Here, Hastings Street, New Street and Regent Street are shown. Between New Town Street and Langley Street, Holly Street, Union Street, Albert Road and Chase Street are shown. To the SE is shown "Park Town", consisting of Minor Road, Wood Street and Park Road, with Langley Street extending down here. Between Bridge Street and Bute Street, Williamson Street has been laid out. To the north of George Street, the area encircled by Church Street, Bute

Street and Guildford Street have been developed, with John Street, Waller Street, Cheapside and Melson Street. Crescent Road links Crawley Green Road and Hitchin Road.

Of these streets, the majority were laid out before 1855, with exceptions being Collingdon Street, Liverpool Street, Alma Street, Williamson Street, Cheapside, Waller Street, Melson Street, John Street, Dudley Street, Wenlock Street, North Street and Havelock Road. This points to a remarkable period of growth between 1842 and 1855, and possibly another spurt related to the coming of the railway from 1858 onwards.

The railway also disrupted the former street system. Love Lane has disappeared; the links between High Town (north of the Lea) and both Bridge Street and Bute Street have been broken.

5.6.7 Bridges

In 1879, the pair of bridges on Bridge Street were destroyed by flood and replaced (Simco 1997).

5.6.8 Buildings

By far the most important factor in the construction of new buildings was the growing hat industry (see Figs 15 and 16). Elsewhere, Chobham Street almshouses were erected in 1887, by which time the 17th century almshouses on Tower Hill and the maltings were gone (Kennett 1974, 3). The theatre in Waller Street were erected in 1872, and the Public Baths in 1898 (White 1977).

The Cross Keys pub, built on the property of the guild of the Holy Trinity on Castle Street, was the "market bar" of the Crown in 1877, and was the part of the pub facing Park Square. For a list of extant buildings dating 1850-1914, see Table 10.

HER no.	Address	Comments
8486	Wootton Hall, Park Street	1897-98
8490	Plait Halls, Cheapside and Waller Street	1868
8491	Old Public Library	1909-10
8493	78 Crawley Green Road (former rectory of St Mary's)	1898-1900
10294	63 Bute Street	1860s Luton grey brick
10293	61 Bute Street	1860s, Luton grey brick
10296	66-68 Bute Street	1870s
10298	70 Bute Street	1870s
10300	5 Castle Street	1870s
10306	82-84 Chapel Street (King's Arms PH)	1860s Luton grey brick
10307	Bethel Baptist Chapel, Chapel Street	1876
10315	23 George Street	Late 19th century
10318	63 George Street	Late 19th century
10319	60 George Street	Edwardian
10320	40A Guildford Street	1870
10321	7-9 George Street West	Late 19th century
10322	9A George Street West	Late 19th century

10323	3 George Street West	1860s
10325	2 George Street West	Early 20th century, factory
10326	4 George Street West	1870s Luton grey brick
10330	40 Guildford Street	1905 hat factory
10331	47 Guildford Street	1860s Luton grey brick
10332	50 Guildford Street	1900 hat factory
10334	Ebeneezer Chapel, Hastings Street	1870s Luton grey brick
10335	11-21 Havelock Road	1870s
10338	High Town Methodist Church, High Town Road	1898 Luton grey brick
10339	High Town Methodist Church Hall, High Town Road	1852
10340	3 Inkerman Street	1860s, domestic scale hat factory
10341	21-39 King Street	1860s
10342	Maltings, rear of Latimer Road	Late 19th century, with attached kilns
10343	3-13 Liverpool Street	1870s
10344	11-13 Manchester Street	1890, built as liberal club
10346	Co-operative society buildings, manor Road	1903 Luton grey brick
10347	7 New Bedford Road	1895 Luton grey brick
10348	Wardown Park Lodge, New Bedford Road	1878 Luton grey brick
10349	Church Hall, New Town Road	Late 19th
10350	145 Old Bedford Road, East Lodge to Wardown Park	1870s Luton grey brick
10367	Wardown Park House	1876 Luton grey brick
10368	Summerhouse, Wardown Park	1876
10369	3-5 Oxford Road	Late 19th century
10372	2-8 Oxford Road	Late 19th century
10382	28-36 Park Street	1870 Luton grey brick
10390	5-9 Park Street West	1860s Luton grey brick
10391	11-13 Park Street West	1860 Luton grey brick
10392	15-19 Park Street West	1860 Luton grey brick
10393	21-23 Park Street West	1860 Luton grey brick
10395	St Saviour's Church, Russell Street	1897-1905
10396	Chapel Langley School, Russell Street	1880 Luton grey brick
10397	279 Stockingstone Road	1890 Luton grey brick
10398	6-8 Union Street	1860
10399	12-20 Union Street	1870s
10400	54-58 Wellington Street	Late 19th century
10404	25 Wellington Street	1906 warehouse
10407	85 Wellington Street	Late 19th century Luton grey brick
10408	93 Wellington Street	Late 19th century
10412	St Matthew's church, Wenlock Street	1875-6
10429	Bailey Hill Water Tower, West Hill Road	1901 Luton grey brick
10430	Hart Hill Water Tower, Hart Lane	1900 Luton grey brick
10434	Bury Park Congregational Church, Waldeck Road	1895-1903
10437	St Paul's Church, Hibbert Street	1890
10519	North Street Advent Church, North Street	1913 Luton grey brick
15332	Mount Tabor Methodist Church, Castle Street	18971
15555	Outbuildings, Wardown Park	1877
1678	Christ Church, Upper George Street	1856-60

| 2850 | "Whitehill", London Road | Luton grey brick |

Table 10. Buildings 1850-1914

5.6.9 Trades

Aside from hat making, there were many trades and professions in the town during the industrial period. The ancillary trades of boxmaking, ribbon selling, block maker, bleaching and stiffening etc and the construction trades of building, carpentry, plastering etc all thrived alongside the hat industry. Trades mentioned in Kelly's directory for the period are shown in Table 13.

Baker	Photographer	Metal worker
Bank manager	Plasterer	Assistant town clerk
Bill posters	Librarian	Hat tip stamper
Brick merchant	Fancy drapers	
Carrier	Bookseller and binder	Builder
Chimney sweeper	Upholsterer	Mineral water manufacturer
Clock maker	Pawnbroker	Greengrocer
Commission agent	Borough surveyor	Veterinary surgeon and inspector
Draper	Confectioner	Miller (wind)
Dress maker	Artist	Miller (steam)
Drill instructor	Beer retailer	Gaiter manufacturer
Eating house keeper	Lodging house keeper	Leather seller and closed upper manufacturer
Fish dealer	Picture frame maker	Timber and slate merchant
Fish monger	Ironmonger	Architect
French professor	Seedsman	Tool maker/engineer
Gas fitter	Accountant	Pastrycook
Ginger beer manufacturer	Cabinet maker	Straw hat finisher
Grindery dealer	French polisher	Chemist
Grocer	Boot and shoe maker	Hay and straw dealer
Hat and tip lining maker	Dentist	Outfitters
House decorator	Coal merchant	Lithographer
Instrument repairer	Pork butcher	Furniture dealer
Insurance agent	Inland Revenue officer	Tea dealer
Laundress	Sugar boiler	Dyer
Lithographer	Drysalter	Coffee tavern proprietor
Lodging house keeper	Disinfectant powder manufacturer	Relieving and vaccination officer
Mason	Basket maker	Auctioneer, estate agent and surveyor
Milliner	Butcher	Straw dyer
Music teacher	Sewing machine engineer	Analytical chemist
Nurseryman	Cowkeeper	Haberdasher
Packing case maker	Sack maker	Druggist
Paper manufacturer	Corn merchant	Poulterer
Plumber and gas fitter	Market toll collector	Fruiterer
Postmaster	Wardrobe dealer	Sewing cotton merchant
Printer	Egg merchant	Farmer
Registrar of marriages	Registrar of births and deaths	Wheelwright
Rope maker	Saw mills	Florist
Saddler	Funeral furnisher	Feather cleaner

School master/mistress	Surgeon	Birdstuffer
Shopkeeper	Watch maker	Coachbuilder
Sign writer	Wine and spirit merchants	Newsagent
Straw hat blockmaker	Straw hat blocker	Engineer and boiler maker
Straw hat machinest	Sewing machine agent	Tobacconist
Straw hat manufacturer	Carpenter	Ostrich feather cleaner
Straw plait merchant	Solicitor	Provision dealer
Tailor	Hair dresser	Hosier
Umbrella maker	Zinc worker	Wood turner
Warehouseman	Birch merchant	Whitesmith
Wood dealer	Oil and colourman	Medical botanist
Zinc and iron plate worker	Stationer	Straw bleacher

Table 11.   Trades from Kelly's directory 1885

Kelly's directory of 1910 gives an impression of some of the other industries taking place in and around the town. Hayward Tyler & Co and Brown & Green Ltd owned iron and brass foundries. A boilerworks was owned by T Lambforth & Co Ltd. There was also a chocolate works.

5.7   *The Hat Making Industry*

5.7.1   Background

By 1830, Luton was already the principal centre for the manufacture of straw hats (Bunker 1999, 18). During the1840s the hat industry was resurgent. This was partly due to the need for good quality, cheap hats after the Napoleonic War. The demand enabled small domestic production units to develop, principally to undertake the "making up" of the hats. This industry could also support the ancillary trades of bleaching, dyeing and block-making (Bunker 1999, 19).

Firms from London wanted to create large branch factories. During the first half of the 19th century, London firms began to expand, and most chose Luton as the place to locate new branches, probably due to the size of the labour pool here (Pinder 1970, 34). The small production units gave the Luton industry a more flexible nature, necessary due to seasonal fluctuations and changes in fashion. The Luton hat industry was characterised by a dependence on female labour, seasonal variation, and the persistence of the small unit and a lack of organisation (Dony 1943, 1).

The factory workforce was augmented with outworkers from the hundreds of small cottage workshops and dwellers around the town. Migrant workers were attracted to Luton due to the depression in agriculture after Napoleonic War (Bunker 1999, 23). This process encouraged people to take up sewing rather than plaiting, which offered less monetary rewards (Bunker 1999, 20). From the early 19th century, plaiting became increasingly confined to rural areas, with better-paid sewing taking place in the towns (Bunker 1993, 50). The very young and the very old eventually undertook straw plaiting. Plaiting had declined by the end of the 19th century, as the industry could rely on imported plaits (Bunker 1993, 53). As sewing was done by women, Luton had a high ratio of women to men (men did the hat blocking). For every 250 women employed in the industry there were around 20 men.

In the second half of the 19th century, plaiting declined and hat making increased. The plaiting industry had disappeared by the 20th century, but hat manufacture continued to thrive, and the production of felt hats gave the industry another boost (Adey 1999, 3). Sir Richard Philips on his 1828 domestic tour said that, without straw plait hat and bonnet manufacture, Luton would be an agricultural village (Adey 1999, 3).

Professional opportunities for men in Luton included construction work (indirectly related to the hat industry) and agricultural labour. The ratio of women to men in 1841 aged 11-20 was 93:30, and for 21-30 it was 81:34 (Bunker 1999, 21). Women could be mothers working from home and exceed the income of their spouse. Child labour was also very important for the industry. Hatting was a family-orientated industry. As a result, there were no large numbers of plait schools in Luton. Home working was very important in Luton (CRO P130/12186). During the first three-quarters of the 19th century, the industry was dominated by small workshops, with 75% of work being done in small units in Luton's houses in 1871 (Bevan 1992, 66). The core of large factories in the town was known as the counter trade (Bunker 1995)

5.7.2 Expansion

The expanding industry required development land, on which to build houses for workers and, later, factories. Considerable movement in the land market during the mid 18th century allowed newcomers to build up holdings (Bunker 1999, 28). The industry was not mechanised (sewing machines did not appear until 1870), so it was relatively easy to set up a business with little outlay; the danger lay more in changing fashions and export (Bunker 1993, 51). The Marquess of Bute had land beyond the Luton Hoo Park encircling the township. He came to regard his Bedfordshire estates as saleable assets (Bunker 1999, 31). Other major land owning families left or disappeared, leaving the expanding industry with room to build (Bunker 1999, 36). This created a glut of affordable building ground as executors and trustees disposed of the land (Bunker 1995). This meant opportunities for small investors, who bought this land almost always for the erection of cottages, where the hats were part or wholly made (Bunker 1995).

5.7.3 Buildings

5.7.3.1 Houses

The construction of houses during this period was driven by small-scale speculative investment. There was no planned growth, nor did any powerful industrialists leave their mark. Luton's landscape was dominated by rows of terraced houses erected with the hat trade in mind (Bunker 1995).

Open space was regarded as nothing more than building ground (Bunker 1999, 37). In the late 1840s, building concentrated in the New Town area, close to Chapel Street. New Streets were almost exclusively for housing. In the 1850s, Albert Road was laid out upon a meadow linking Langley Street with Prospect Place (Bunker 1999, 38).

Between 1830-1850, typical houses in Luton were built in local plum-coloured brick (Bunker 1999, 41), which reflected the symbiotic relationship between the brick and hat making industries at this time. These houses were badly constructed. There was a cholera outbreak in Adelaide terrace in 1853, where there were 33 back to back one-up, one-down cottages, a communal well, a communal cesspit and just four privies. Building was unregulated until the mid 1850s, providing a great diversity of building types. In reality, they were ill-ventilated and shoddily constructed with no sanitation or lighting facilities. The most squalid areas of the town were Spring Place, Bryden's Passage, Gaitskell Terrace and Chase Street (Bunker 1999, 44). Luton did not go as far as other towns; there were no cellar dwellings, no dense alleys and rookeries. Some new housing was good, with ventilation and adequate facilities. The best was that in George Street West and London Road.

Building activity was curtailed in the 1860s. This was due to the 1848 Health of Towns Act, and the 1858 Local Government Act. However, both of these were quite weak pieces of legislation which did not stop the building altogether. Henceforth, brick-built two storey terraces typified housing. A large scullery or back room for industry was included on most houses. No back to back houses were built after 1850 (Bunker 1999, 45). The industry needed to be flexible, as it depended largely on fluctuations in fashion, therefore anything bigger than a two storey terraced house was a risky undertaking (Bunker 1995).

During the years 1840-1876 a house type evolved with a retail outlet on the groundfloor - for example in Bute Street, Waller Street, Cheapside, George Street and Park Street, the commercial heart of the town (Bunker 1999, 47).

Three main different house types were identifiable in Luton during this period (Smith 1972).

Type 1) Front room and living room divided by stairs running parallel with the street, two bedrooms above. Ground floor had a coalhouse, WC, kitchen/workshop with a single room above for sewing, accessible from rear bedroom. The rear extension was half the width of the house. These were placed back to back in two rows, divided by an access alley. They date mainly from 1860-70 and can be seen in the Alma Street and Inkerman Street area. The same type with smaller rear extensions is found in New Town and High Town.

Type 2) Similar to type 1, but in pairs, with a narrow passage between every other house leading to the yard. A separate kitchen and workroom were provided on the ground floor of the rear extension. These are found in the High Town area *c*.1870-1900.

Type 3) This type saw the access passage widened, and an additional bedroom above, as seen in Clarendon Road and Hazlebury Crescent 1900 to 1914.

Houses of the 1920s in Clarendon road show the big windows and substantial dormers of hat making houses. They also display the long rear gardens to allow extensions (Bevan 1992, 23).

5.7.3.2 Warehouses and factories

In the first half of the 20th century, many of factory and warehouse premises were rebuilt or demolished, and little remains from before 1850 (Bevan 1992, 24) – see Fig 16. Two-thirds of hat factories were built before 1922, and the remainder in the succeeding decade (Pinder 1968). Warehouses and factories were not very specialised buildings, and could be used for both the purposes of manufacture and storage. In fact, buying and selling took place in factories in the sale/show rooms, so in that respect they were warehouse and factory combined (Bevan 1992, 41). Access to the basement for receiving plait or despatching hats in boxes was through flaps in the pavement. The basements were for the storage of plait and for packing (Bevan 1992, 35).

The lower levels of factories were indistinguishable from warehouses. In both types of building, the cellar space was used for packing goods and for despatch and the ground floor was for show and salerooms. The upper floor of a factory was the workroom. Stiffening, blocking and finishing were done in other detached buildings, probably to segregate the tasks involving smelly chemicals (Bevan 1992, 40).

Hucklesby and Co. were in George Street by 1876 and occupied a building along Bond Street: a warehouse (not for manufacture) now demolished (Bevan 1992, 33). A later generation of warehouses are demonstrated by 64 Bute Street, built in1889 and 50 Guildford Road, built in 1895 (Bevan 1992, 34). The earlier, better hatting buildings are listed. In 1992, the listed purpose-built buildings were 64 Bute Street, and 40 & 40a Guildford Street. The Conservation Area covering much of the Bute Street area (Fig14) offers protection against the demolition of unlisted buildings. Those dating to around 1920 have limited cover (Bevan 1992, 97).

The buildings connected with the hat making industry covered quite an extensive area of the town - see Table 12 (Bevan 1992 & CRO P130 12185–6).

Bute Street area	Date	Comments
Cheapside Plait Hall, HER 8490	1869	
Waller Street Plait Hall, HER 8490	1869	
46 George Street/Bond Street (dem.). Building was a warehouse, not for production	c.1876	
64 Bute Street, warehouse	1889	Grade II
50 Guildford Street, warehouse (later factory)	c.1889	Grade II
40 Guildford Street, warehouse	c.1905	Grade II
23 Bute Street, hat factory	By 1895	
106 & 108 Wellington Street	c.1859	Workshop extensions to the rear, divided by a "straw gate" – access for cart with straw/plait
Park Street West 11 & 13, 21 & 23	c.1859	As above, also with cellars
Dumfries Street	c.1859	Cellars

Collingdon Street	1860+	Cellars, straw gates, passages to rear
Upper George Street	1860+	Cellars, straw gates, passages to rear
Inkerman Street	1860+	Cellars, houses raised up on front steps – mirroring arrangement in central warehouses (P66)
47 – 51 Collingdon Street	C19th	Illustrates hybrid building typical of small/medium businesses in outlying areas – 47 is massively extended house, 49-51 is a symmetrically planned purpose-built premises (P70)
65-67 Bute Street (now the artezium) was a hat factory,	Façade is interwar	
Hat factory, corner of Guildford Street/Barber Lane	1860s	Grade II
32 Guildford Street, hat factory (now a gym)	1890s	
30 Guildford Street, hat factory (now bridal wear)	1919	
37-39 Guildford Street, warehouse and factory (now clothing factory, divided up)	1912	
12 Guildford Street, warehouse	lC19th?	Dem..
4-10 Melson Street (10 purpose-built)	LC19th?	
Cheapside, various	?	
16 John Street	lC19th?	Purpose-built factory
49 Cheapside	lC19th?	Only one remaining of row which extended south to Silver Street
42-48, 50 Cheapside, hat factories	?	
53 Cheapside, HER no.8083	C19th	Brick – possible hat factory
Bute Street, Vyse's hat factory (now TSB)	1930s	
Corner of Bute Street/Guildford Street	1907	Warehouses, now dem..
57-61 Guildford Street, hat factory (offices and flats)	?	
Site of multistorey car park, was dye works		
Shannon Hotel Bute Street/Guildford Street corner, factory or warehouse	1860s +later	Grade II
Bridge Street at the corner with Manchester Street, hat factory	1907-8	
High Town area		
Between Guildford Street and railway was enormous railway warehouse to store boxes of hats prior to despatch (now student blocks)	C19th?	
98-100 Midland Road, hat factory	Pre 1895	
Dudley Street/Midland Road (now various businesses) hat factory	1930	
1-5 Dudley Street, hat factory	?	Only one of these is old
2-4 Dudley Street, hat factory	1920s	
East Dudley Street, south of Albion Path		All involved in hat industry at some time or another

29 Albion Road, hat factory	1914	Burnt down 1978
41-43 Dudley Street (now paper cutters)	E C20th ?	Former hat factory
65-67 Dudley Street (boxes for hats now)		Former hat factory
Coupees Path, part of hat factory 10 Old Bedford Road	eC20th	
Chiltern House, corner of midland Road/Old Bedford Road, hat factory (now vacant)	1930s	
Genevieve Louis ltd, Old Bedford Road	?	Example of domestic frontage with workshops to the rear
Territorial Drill Hall		Was area of field used by Coupees until 1914
12 Frederick Street, ribbon sellers	?	Randall's Ribbons
Frederick Road, printers	1910	
106 Bedford Road, box factory	Pre 1920s	1939, hat factory
Old Bedford Road, opposite the Wickets	1857	Site of Lye's dyeworks, dem.. 1990 for housing
Clarendon Road	?	The Old Hat Factory Flats and nos. 1 to 11 were hatting buildings at some point
Corner of Havelock Road/North Street	c.1889	Was used as Children's Sick and Convalescent Home, donated by a retired hat manufacturer
North Street/Havelock Road	pre1881	Former boys school used as cardboard box factory
North Street – dyeing works	eC20th	Barford Bros
37- 43 York Street, hat factory	pre1914	Dem.?
33-35 High Town Road, hat factory	eC20th?	Now the Post Office
38-42 High Town Road	c.1890	Sewing machine engineers

Table 12.   Buildings related to the hat industry

5.7.4   Streets

New streets were built specifically for housing workers for the hat industry.

Access to the railway was important in locating the warehouses and factories, as plait was imported in the late 19th century, and orders for hats came in from all over the world. Felt hats were produced from the 1870s, precipitating the need for the delivery of wool by rail (CRO/P130/12186). The location of the George Street/railway concentration of factories was due to the position of the Midland and Bute Street railway stations, as well as the presence of undeveloped meadow land between the stations, situated on the southern slope of the High Town spur. This constituted space for factory development. This meadowland also had public buildings built on it, such as baths, a theatre and plait halls (Pinder 1970, 270).

The importance of the Waller brothers to the hat industry is reflected in the street named after them, Waller Street. Adelaide Street may also be named after Queen Adelaide, whom Waller made a hat for when he visited Tuscany (Davis 1855, 155).

Between 1850 and 1930, Bute Street was the centre of the expanding industry; hatting buildings were concentrated here, and the new Cheapside and Waller

Street Plait Halls replaced the open market (Bevan 1992). Cheapside and Waller Street housed the new covered market halls, built in 1869 to regulate the trade and provide shelter and storage. They were brick-fronted with light iron and glass roofs, supported on sidewalls and rows of columns (Bevan 1992, 28). These halls were examples of the 19th century trend of creating specialised building types for activities previously conducted in the open (*ibid* 1992, 29).

The concentration of industrial activity around Bute Street was remarkable; nearly every building was involved in the trade or in an ancillary trade, such as the manufacture of cardboard boxes, ribbons, thread, and sewing machines (Bevan *ibid*, 64).

The first house built in High Town was in 1815, on Windmill Hill. "Donkey Hall" was the name used for the developing area. In 1851, High Town had a population of nearly 1,900. Prior to this, the only development in the area either north or east of the river was a few cottages called Coney Hall (CRO P130/12186). This housing was poor; after the 1850 Health Inquiry, it was demolished on a large scale. The area has strong non-conformist church traditions. Large factories did not appear here until the eve of WWI. It became a Conservation Area in 1978, separated from the centre of Luton by the railways.

By 1842, the southern end of High Town Road and Back Street to the south of Burr Street was developed. Soon after, the area between High Town Road and Hitchin Road was developed in Burr, Duke and York Streets. By 1871, Cobden Street had been developed. North Street and Dudley Street spread towards High Town Road from Coney Hall. In the 1880s, Wenlock Street joined the two. By 1901, Frederick Street and the western end of Reginald Street were developed. By 1914, the area up to Clarendon Road was completely developed. Coupees Path probably follows the line of an old footpath leading north to the hamlet of Coney Hall. The name comes from the bleaching and dyeing firm that used a field it crosses for bleaching hats in the sun (CRO P130 12186). Mussons Path and Frederick Street Passage served as rear service roads for hat workshops stretching behind houses.

The coming of the Midland Railway (1868) meant the demolition of Love Lane and the lower part of High Town Road; only the Station House remains. People's Park developed as a compensation for the damage done to the area by the railway. It also served to restrict High Town's development northwards.

As the Burr family sold off parcels of their land, the family was recalled in street names, e.g. Burr, Reginald and Frederick Streets.

Albert Road was built in 1853 over an area shown to be fields on the 1842 Tithe map (CRT 130/45/7480).

5.8   The Modern Period (AD1914 - present)

Luton continued to grow throughout the 20th century (Fig 11). Gradually, the surrounding hamlets became absorbed into the town, which attained county

borough status in 1964. During the 1950s and 1970s, the area between High
Town Road and Hitchin Road was rebuilt for industrial purposes, and the
Wenlock Street-Boyle Street area was redeveloped for housing (CRO P130
12186). George Street was widened in 1938 and redeveloped to form a more
convenient shopping area.

Very little new connected with the hat industry was built after 1930.
Engineering began to replace hatting as the main employer in the town
(CRO/P130/12186). However women's felt hats took over and made up 75%
of Luton trade in 1939. The Second World War led to a further contraction
(Bevan 1992, 95).

The Town Hall was built in 1936 to replace the one burnt down in the 1919
Peace Day riot. It is in the art deco style. Other 1930s buildings include 55-
61 George Street, the cinema on George Street, 41-49 George Street, 2-4
George Street and the Marks and Spencer building on George Street.

The Central Library was constructed in 1960-2. The Crown Court was
constructed in 1986 on the corner of Market Hill and Castle Street.

An extension to St Mary's Church was built in 1969 to house the church hall
and offices.

Much of the development of the town has had a detrimental effect on the
archaeology. For example, the Arndale Centre, begun in 1974, has obliterated
the area between George Street and the railway, and south-eastwards as far as
Church Street. Many buildings, which may have contained medieval work,
will have been destroyed in this way. Numerous streets which contained
buildings pertaining to the hat industry were also destroyed or cut short,
including Waller Street, Guildford Street, Bute Street, Williamson Street,
Melson Street, Cheapside, Smith's Lane and Barber's Lane. It also broke the
link between George Street and the railways, which had been so essential to
the industry (Bevan 1992, 96). The construction of the College of Technology
in the area of the church in 1960 is likely to have destroyed archaeological
evidence for Roman occupation, as well as evidence for Anglo-Saxon and
medieval buildings. The same could be said of the University of Luton
Resource Centre, which adjoins the church. The airport opened in 1938 to the
east of the town, destroying an early 1800s model farm (HER 1558).

5.8.1 Population
Between 1911 and 1991, Luton's population grew from 49,978 to 167,009.

5.8.2 The Second World War
During the Second World War, parts of Luton were bombed, damaging over
400 houses. The worst damage occurred at the junction of Beechwood Road
and Waller Avenue. The Airport, Vauxhall works, the bus depot in Park
Street and areas of Farley Hill were also hit (Luton News 1947). Industry,
however, suffered little damage, and the town remained an important
production centre throughout the War. The hat industry declined after the
Second World War.

6. ASSESSMENT OF LUTON'S CHARACTER, IMPORTANCE AND POTENTIAL

6.1 Character of the Present Town

Luton today is primarily a 19th and 20th century industrial town, the product of a process of rapid expansion and industrialisation in the last century and a half, which is quite unparalleled in the other historic towns of Bedfordshire. It is the only town in the county where manufacturing has really taken root to the extent that it has transformed the town from a rural market town to a kind of heavily industrialised townscape comparable to large midland cities, such as Coventry or Birmingham. Fig 12 provides a graphical depiction of this process.

With the exception of St Mary's Church, the medieval fabric of the old town of Luton has largely disappeared under more recent development. Surviving buildings of hat making and related industries are of great interest, as are the many examples of 1930s architecture which dominate some of the old streets. But there is an apparent contradiction at the heart of any archaeological and historical study of Luton. That is, in studying the town prior to its great expansion in the 19th century, we are dealing with a very small market town with an agricultural economy set in a largely rural landscape. This historic core of the town is very limited in size, roughly comparable to other small Bedfordshire towns such as Shefford or Biggleswade. It is almost as though there are two Lutons – the first the large industrial town which is most apparent to the eye today, the second a small market town, the traces of which are largely hidden.

Even so, it is important to recognise both these Lutons and to be able to discern the historical connections between them. Industrialisation was not just something that came in and transformed Luton from outside. It is also the case that the framework and conditions for subsequent growth were established in Luton itself in the earlier period. For example, the origins of the hat industry (which created the basic industrial infrastructure and workforce that later enabled Vauxhall Motors, Skefco and other engineering companies to move into the town) lie in the straw plaiting and other cottage industries of an earlier, essentially agricultural, economy. It is such distinctively local strands and themes in the development of the town that make Luton quite unique, not only in the county but in the country as a whole.

This makes it all the more crucial not to lose site of the ancient little market town that lies at the heart of the industrial townscape. Although built over, bombed and completely enfolded by subsequent development – its two castles largely forgotten, its river now running in conduits below the surface - the basic shape of the old town still exists within the fabric of the new. Because everything expanded outwards from here, this is where any exploration of the historical reasons for the growth of the town ultimately leads, and where the identity of the town is ultimately rooted.

The town currently has three Conservation Areas (Fig 14). The first is the town centre, designated in 1975. This contains many listed buildings and

some of local historic interest. The second consists of the area covered by the shopping area at the southern end of High Town Road. It was designated in July 1978 as an area of relatively unchanged Victorian and Edwardian development. The third lies between the Arndale Centre and the bus station. It was designated in 1991 in an attempt to preserve the town's industrial heritage. It was here that the 19th century hat industry was centred.

6.2   Archaeological Potential

6.2.1   The Historic Core
Few archaeological investigations have been undertaken within the historic core of the town itself. The potential for archaeological survival is limited in some ways, but in other ways there is great potential for further work and discoveries. Extensive redevelopment has taken place within the historic core, both in the 19th and 20th centuries. The construction of the Arndale Centre in particular will have caused the loss of a great deal of archaeological material. A rapid cellar survey suggests that many of the buildings in the historic core of the town are cellared (Fig 17). However, the small number of archaeological investigations does not provide a sufficient basis for assessing the archaeological potential of the historic core. Almost certainly there will be pockets of undisturbed archaeological stratigraphy which could shed great light on the town's medieval development and answer many questions about its Anglo-Saxon origins.

It is possible that evidence for medieval buildings will be recovered during future redevelopment around the church, and the site of the medieval bridge on Bridge Street. It is unlikely, however, that many medieval buildings remain to be found behind 19th century shop fronts, due the exhaustive work of D H Kennett and T P Smith on both the extant and demolished material.

Areas of particular interest for buried archaeology centre on the church, the old medieval street pattern, the presumed centre of the historic core in the Park Square area, the crossing points over the River Lea, and the two castle sites. There is also a general background of prehistoric and Roman activity, evidence of which might be expected to be found all along the Lea valley, including the historic core. More archaeological investigations are needed in this area.

6.2.2   Area of 19th and 20th century expansion
It is not within the remit of this project to explore the archaeological potential of the whole area covered by Luton today. Such an undertaking would be moving far beyond the parameters of urban survey to study the essentially rural archaeology which lies within and beneath the present built-up area. It would have to take into account prehistoric monuments such as Waulud's Bank and Drays Ditches, the Romano-British settlement at Limbury, and the early Anglo-Saxon cemeteries at Argylle Avenue and Biscot Mill, in addition to the industrial heritage. As well as the general background of scattered prehistoric and later farmsteads along the Lea valley, it would also have to consider a Roman villa or two and the many medieval manors, hamlets and mills. All of these have been mentioned but not focused upon here, the focus

having been directed specifically onto the development of the urban settlement of Luton itself. However, it is important to highlight the fact that such a project needs to be undertaken, to supplement this urban survey.

With regard to the recent development of Luton itself, perhaps the most important area of archaeological value and potential is the hat making district centred on Bute Street and nearby roads. This was the heartland of the industrial town where many factories and warehouses were situated. Although many of these buildings were demolished when the Arndale Centre was built, others have survived and are now serving different purposes. Equally important are the surviving houses in outlying areas (e.g. Wellington Street, Collingdon Street, Upper George Street, etc) which, with workshop extensions and straw gates, served as 'cottage factories'. This built environment is a unique aspect of Luton's heritage.

6.3   Archaeological Components

All archaeological components described below are shown on Fig 18.

- **Component 1.** *St Mary's Church and Churchyard*
  The church building is largely 14th century, and is the only surviving medieval building in the core of the town. Although it was supposedly completely rebuilt in the 12th century, it seem likely that it was rebuilt on or very close to the site of the original Saxon church. As the church would have been a focus for the settlement and activities of the community, the area round the churchyard is of especial archaeological potential.

- **Component 2.** *The Medieval Town*
  The medieval town developed around the church of St Mary and extended to the medieval bridge on Bridge Street. The main street, George Street/Park Street, ran parallel to the River Lea, with roads heading northwards (Bridge Street, Church Street, Lea Road) to each of the three crossing points. The main approach to the town is provided by the north-south road between London and Bedford (Castle Street). It is not known to what extent this reflects the shape of the earliest Anglo-Saxon settlement. There is reasonably good potential for archaeological levels surviving beneath buildings in the town centre wherever there is no cellaring. Experience in Bedford has shown that roads sometimes follow and may preserve the course of early boundary ditches. It is not known if the boundaries of the early town were defined by a boundary ditch.

- **Component 3.** *Market Place*
  The market and fairs of Luton may have originally been held in or near the churchyard but by the medieval period the site had moved to Market Hill, on the junction of George Street and Castle Street. The cattle and sheep markets, and also the plait market, would have extended along George Street in both directions, certainly as far as Park Square. A market house was in place on Market Hill by the 18th century. This was replaced in 1867 by the Corn Exchange, in turn demolished in 1951. Due to overcrowding of the narrow streets, the plait market was moved from here in 1869 to a newly constructed covered market in Waller Street.

- **Component 4.** *North Bridge (Bridge Street)*
  Also known as Horsepool Bridge, North Bridge was one of the most important bridges over the Lea during medieval times – carrying as it did the main north-south highway running between Bedford and London. There are records of a bridge here in the late 12th century, though by the late 18th century there was only a small timber bridge besides a ford. This was replaced by two brick bridges (there were two river channels here at that time – one of them was the leat for the nearby mill). There is some potential for the survival of archaeological levels pertaining to the bridge beneath the buildings on the SE side of Bridge Street and on the NW side in the open space between the railway and the road.

- **Component 5.** *River crossing (Church Street)*
  The existence of Church Street implies a crossing at the point where it approached the River Lea, and there was probably a ford here from a very early date. There is also likely to have been a bridge here from late Saxon times on. No early records survive to confirm this supposition, however. In the late 18th century it was described as a raised path with a plank across the stream for foot passengers (presumably with a ford alongside). It was replaced at this time by a two-arch bridge made of brick.

- **Component 6.** *Blackwater Bridge*
  A bridge existed in the mid 18th century at the point where the Inner Circuit Road (A505) crosses the River Lea (now covered over). This could once have been the principal crossing guarded by Fulk de Breaute's castle (Component 8).

- **Component 7.** *Robert de Waudari's Castle*
  Constructed in about 1139 by Robert de Waudari, this timber motte-and-bailey castle was pulled down in 1154 under the terms of a truce. Its historical context was the struggle for the Crown between Stephen and Matilda. The purpose must have been to block attack from the south by controlling the route coming into Luton from London, as well as to dominate the town from the high ground. The name of Castle Street preserves the folk-memory of the castle's former existence. Chapel Street may have come into existence to go round the castle. Excavations in 1963 and 2002 have confirmed the fact that a large ditch survives the later development of the site.

- **Component 8.** *Fulk de Breaute's Castle*
  Built in 1221 by Fulk de Breaute, little is known about its exact size or form of construction. Apparently it was dismantled within a century and possibly within a decade of its construction. It was situated on the SE side of the church, next to the River Lea. No excavations have yet been carried out to investigate this important structure.

- **Component 9.** *Hat Factories and Warehouses*
  These represent some of Luton's most important buildings in terms of its industrial heritage. Although much was lost when the Arndale Centre was constructed, the Guildford Street/Bute Street area contains many examples of

these types of buildings and is currently designated as a Conservation Area. Other areas of related interest are the houses with workshop extensions in outlying streets.

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