

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
PLANNING DEPARTMENT.

23rd February 1953.

Dear Mr. Peake,

Harpenden Development Plan.

A CRUCIAL 1951 PROPOSAL
- copy attached (also in the 2010 Commentary as Annex A)

As promised I am now writing to let you have my comments on the views of the Harpenden Society upon the Harpenden Development Plan. I am pleased to see that the Society accepts so much of the Plan, and I find it rather encouraging that the few criticisms which I have received on the Harpenden proposals have all been centred on the same one or two points.

So far as the Harpenden Society's resolutions are concerned, I can assure you that the points raised have been considered not once but several times. As the Plan has now been formally adopted by the County Council and is before the Minister for consideration, I am sure you will appreciate that there is little which I can do to alter it at this stage. However, I set out below, very briefly, the comments on the Harpenden Society's resolutions, and I trust that after they have seen these they will not think it necessary to raise any formal objection with the Minister.

Resolutions 1 and 2.

The alternative site for the proposed bridge has several disadvantages particularly from the economic point of view. The junction of Lower Luton Road and the new bridge suggested by the Society would be very difficult to design satisfactorily unless extensive demolition of property is to take place. Furthermore, the poor alignment of the existing road B.652 would be perpetuated and it would still be necessary to widen the existing bridge. Carrying out the County Development Plan proposals removes this necessity. I notice that it is suggested that the construction of the bridge half way across the valley would present the possibility of later re-appropriation of either half of the area for other uses. This, however, it is clearly the object of the Development Plan to prevent. If there was thought to be any need for the use of the river side land for any other purpose, the Development Plan would have shown it as such. As it is you will have noticed that the Plan shows the land as Public Open Space and there is no intention to alter this principle.

So far as the attraction of traffic to Station Road is concerned, the County Surveyor is quite satisfied that this can be avoided by suitable design.

Resolution 3(a).

I do not think there is any substantial difference between the Harpenden Society and the County Council on this point. The main difference is one of economics. There is no intention of allowing any extensive development in the Lea Valley. There are, however, certain existing buildings and there are a few outstanding planning permissions which have not been acted upon. Apart from allowing the reasonable extension in suitable cases of existing buildings and the carrying out of the planning permissions which have already been granted, the County Council agree that no further building development should be permitted south of Pickford Bridge.

Resolution 4(a).

Here again, I wonder whether the Society have given sufficient weight to the economic side of the proposals. I do not think that either the County Council or the Harpenden U.D.C. would be willing to buy out the shops and other buildings which now lie south of Pickford Bridge between Lower Luton Road and Marquis Lane. This would be the only way of ensuring the ultimate removal of these various buildings. Although some of them are old they still have a long useful life, and I do not think the stage has yet been reached when steps can be taken to obtain their removal.

Yours sincerely,

E. H. Doubleday (Herts C.C.)

12th February, 1953.

E.H. Doubleday Esq.,
County Planning Officer,
Hertfordshire County Council,
HERTFORD.

Dear Mr. Doubleday,

The Harpenden Society, originally named The Harpenden & District Preservation Society, was formed in 1930. Its aims are to safeguard the amenities of Harpenden and its environs and to do everything possible to preserve and enhance its beauty.

It is chiefly from this standpoint that the Committee of the Society has considered the Harpenden Development Plan, and it was pleased to find from the interesting and informative Analysis and Survey issued with the Plan that the status and character which Harpenden has achieved is fully appreciated by the Planning Authority and that its future development is envisaged on correspondingly appropriate lines.

While in agreement with many of the proposals in the Plan, the Committee of the Society approved the following four resolutions to submit to the County Planning Authority or to the Minister.

As it was thought desirable that there should be an opportunity for Members and the general public to express their views, a General Meeting of the Society was called, open to the public, which was duly advertised in the Press and held in Harpenden on Monday, February 9th.

At this meeting the following resolutions of the Society Nos. 1 to 4 were put forward. Resolutions 1 and 2 were passed nem. con. Resolutions 3 and 4 were amended and the amended motions as carried are included as Nos. 3a and 4a.

A sketch map is enclosed for reference.

1. That the Lea Valley between Pickford Bridge and the foot of Piggottshill Lane should be maintained as an open space becoming an essential amenity to the Batford area and should not be intersected by the proposed new bridge over the River Lea at the bend in Station Road. In addition to detracting very much from the Recreational Value of the whole space, the proposed intersection would present the possibility of a later re-appropriation of either half of the area for other uses. Moreover, the siting of the bridge at the point suggested in the plan would be likely to attract traffic on to Station Road, and to the bottleneck at its junction with the main Luton-St. Albans road where congestion is already serious. (Carried nem. con.)

2. That the bridge should be sited to carry a short new road running north-east from the junction of Piggottshill and Marquis Lanes to join the Lower Luton Road at right angles, thereby steering southward traffic towards Piggottshill Lane as intended in the County Plan and thus a saving be effected by Marquis Lane not being developed into a main road (Passed nem. con.)

3. That no further industrial or public-building development other than the proposed new church should be permitted south of Pickford Bridge between Marquis Lane and the Lower Luton Road. (Words "industrial or public" omitted see 3a.)

4. That the owners of shops now located on the river side of the Lower Luton Road south of Pickford Bridge should be offered alternative accommodation in the proposed new "shops" area facing the eastern end of Pickford Bridge, that the existing shop buildings should be removed when circumstances permit and that there should be no further building development at Batford Mill. (Amended see 4a.)

3a. That no further building development, other than the proposed new Church should be permitted south of Pickford Bridge between Lower Luton Road on the east and Station Road and Marquis Lane on the West. (Carried).

4a. That the owners of shops and other building now located to the south of Pickford Bridge in the area bounded by Lower Luton Road on the east and Station Road and Marquis Lane on the west, should be offered alternative accommodation when circumstances permit. When this has been taken up the existing buildings should be removed, also that there should be no further building development at Batford Mill. (Carried).

The Society requests your kind consideration of the proposals put forward and hopes for your approval.

Yours sincerely;

(Signed) W. O. Peake

President.

6. Churches.

4 new churches are to be built :

Batford 1 (1953-58)

New residential areas 3 (1958-73)

7. Government Buildings.

A new postal sorting office is to be erected off Vaughan Road (1951-53) and a new automatic telephone exchange in Amenbury Lane (1953-58).

8. Cinema.

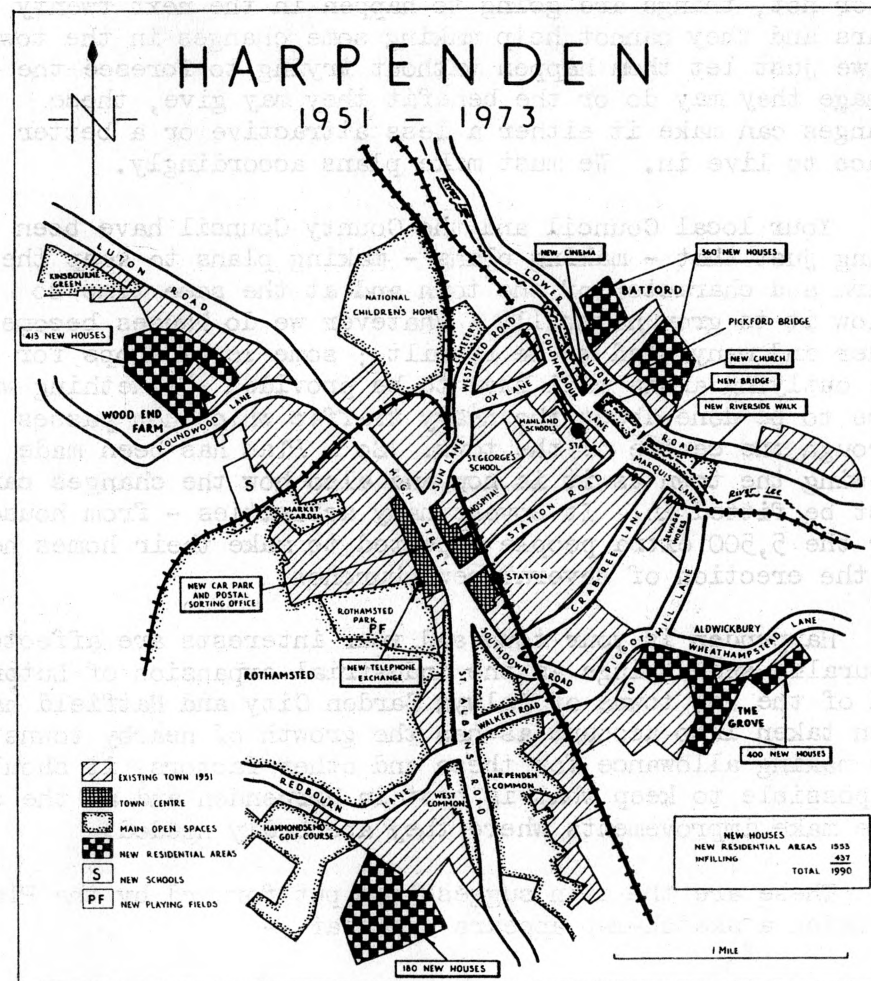
Provision is made for a third cinema at Batford near to Pickford Bridge (1958-73).

These are the Plan's main proposals but others covering many items such as offices, fire station, playing fields and the like are contained in detail in the full Report (Survey and Development Plan for Harpenden), copies of which will be on view and on sale at the Council Offices at Harpenden Hall.

A similar Report has been prepared for each of the Urban District and Boroughs in the County - except the New Towns - and a more general report dealing with the County as a whole (County Development Plan) will also be available and may be obtained from Messrs. Stephen Austin & Sons Ltd., Fore Street, Hertford, price 25s.0d.

Issued by County Planning Department, County Hall,
Hertford. Telephone : Hertford 3131.

(Divisional Planning Office : 96, Victoria Street,
St. Albans. Telephone : St. Albans 5282.)



"It will all be the same in Twenty Years Time ! "

- if that were true there might be some reason for Harpenden people to say : "Well for goodness' sake leave the town as it is." But it is not true - whether we like it or not, things are going to happen in the next twenty years and they cannot help making some changes in the town. If we just let them happen without trying to foresee the damage they may do or the benefit they may give, these changes can make it either a less attractive or a better place to live in. We must make plans accordingly.

Your local Council and the County Council have been doing just that - making plans - making plans to keep the charm and character of the town and at the same time to allow it to grow naturally. Whatever we do houses become older and many need to be rebuilt ; some local shops for the outlying areas will have to be provided ; something will have to be done about the heavy traffic which now passes through the centre of the town. So a Plan has been made showing the town as it is now and also how the changes can best be fitted in. It covers many activities - from houses for the 5,500 extra people expected to make their homes here, to the erection of several new churches.

Harpenden is your town and your interests are affected. Naturally such things as the industrial expansion of Luton and of the new towns of Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield have been taken into account as has the growth of nearby towns, but making allowance for these and other factors, it should be possible to keep what is best in Harpenden and at the same time make improvements where they are badly needed.

These are the main suggestions put forward by the Plan, of which a sketch-map appears overleaf :-

1. Houses.

About 2,000 houses are to be built :

200 at Batford and on other sites, between 1951-53.

500 at Batford and on other sites, between 1953-58.

1,290 at West Common, Wood End Farm, The Grove and other sites, between 1958-73.

2. Shops.

Provision is made for 69 new shops :

Batford 12 (1953-58)

Town Centre, North Harpenden
and Southdown Road area 57 (1958-73)

3. Schools.

There are to be 3 new schools :

Round Wood Park area - Primary (1953-58)

Round Wood Park area - Secondary } (1958-73)
Grove Road - Primary }

4. Roads.

In addition to general improvements, a new bridge is to be constructed over the River Lee near to Pickford Bridge to provide a second link between the town centre and the Lower Luton Road. This, together with the improvement of Marquis Lane, Piggotshill Lane and Walkers Road, will form an outer ring-road from the Lower Luton Road to St. Albans Road and a link, by way of Redbourn Lane, with Watling Street (1953-73).

Bowers Way is to be extended southwards to join Vaughan Road (1953-73).

5. Car Parks.

A new car park is to be provided on backland between Vaughan Road and Bowers Way (1953-58) and additional facilities in the town centre (1958-73).