# SUMMARY

A brief summary of the essential points revealed by the survey and the proposals put forward in the Plan.

Harpenden is a residential town situated on Trunk Road A.6 midway, between the larger and more industrialised towns of St. Albans and Luton. The population in 1951 was about 14,240. The town is of comparatively modern growth. It had a population of less than 5,000 at the beginning of this century and has doubled in size since 1921. This expansion is largely accounted for by the number of people who have found the town to be a convenient and pleasant dormitory.

The industrial employment available in the town is limited. The ratio of employed people to total population is comparatively low and the proportion employed in manufacturing industry is small. Professional services and the distributive trades are the largest employers of labour. The existence of several, large research institutions and independent schools has an important influence on the character of the town. Harpenden should retain its character as a residential town. The Plan therefore makes no provision for extensive industrial development. Allowance is made for the expansion of existing industries and the establishment of a few new light industries.

The 1947 Memorandum of the Minister of Town and Country Planning upon the Greater, London Plan suggested that Harpenden should be capable of growth to 20,000 population and this figure has been accepted as the basis for this Plan.

Land suitable to accommodate the additional population is principally situated at Batford to the north-east Of the town, at North Harpenden near Roundwood Lane, at West Common and on the Grove Estate to the south-east.

Traffic conditions in Harpenden will be altered very considerably when the Birmingham Radial Road is constructed. This road, which is outside the area covered by the Plan, is designed to relieve road A.6 of the heavy industrial traffic which now 'passes through Harpenden. The principal road proposal put forward in ' the Plan is an improved link between the Lower Luton Road and A.6 to form an outer ring road on the eastern and southern sides of the town.

Some other proposals included in the Plan are:

(i) Improved shopping facilities principally in the outlying" parts of the town.

(ii) Greater scope for business generally,, especially office accommodation, sites' for service industry and for storage purposes.

(iii)' Improved educational facilities for the town as a whole and for the new centres of housing development in particular.

(iv) More open spaces, especially for organised games and the provision of allotment gardens.

(v) The reservation of sites for the religious and cultural well-being of the expanded town—churches, halls and places of assembly, with all of which should be associated the intention of creating the semblance of a true civic centre at the northern end of the Common.

The whole of the development outlined in the Plan is expected to be carried out within twenty years.

# FOREWORD

In preparing a Planning Report, assistance from many sources must be obtained if the Report is to be well founded. I am pleased to acknowledge all the help received while the Survey was being made and this Report written. I feel, however, that particular acknowledgement is due to the Council and Staff of the Harpenden Urban District Council and especially to Mr. H. E; Stopher, M.Sc., the Council's Surveyor, whose suggestions based on wide local knowledge were invaluable; my colleagues, the other Chief Officers of the County Council and their respective staffs the Divisional Planning Officer and the staff of the Central Herts Divisional Planning Office; and to the Ordnance Survey, whose topographical and geological maps form the basis of the Plan and from which much information has been extracted.

E. H. DOUBLEDAY, County Planning Officer.

**GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

**Regional Position and Geography**

Harpenden has developed as a middle-class residential town and, because of its situation between the older and more industrialised centres at St. Albans and Luton, has tended towards "dormitory" development. The distance between these two latter towns is ten miles and Harpenden is equidistant between them. A good train service to London has helped this dormitory tendency. It is not easy to find a sound reason why, in the growth of Harpenden, industry has so small a place. It may be that an explanation is to be found in the following facts—(a) both St. Albans and Luton have multi-directional road and rail communications whereas Harpenden, being halfway between St. Albans and Luton, has infinitely more convenient and direct communication with those two centres than in any other direction ; (b) both St. Albans and Luton were well developed industrially before Harpenden began to make any real growth. (1)

There is rail linkage with Redbourn and Hemel Hempstead to the west, and with Wheathampstead and Welwyn Garden City to the east. (2)

Geographically, Harpenden is within two shallow valleys running noth and south, the ridge between the two valleys forming the watershed of the, Thames above Teddington and the Lee below Teddington. The containing ridges east and west of the town and the central ridge, rise to a height of slightly over 400 feet above sea level. Through the more easterly of 'the two valleys flows the River Lee. (3)

The surrounding countryside is attractive and the town setting is greatly enhanced by Harpenden Common which extends right into the town centre.

**General Historical Background**

Historically, the reason for the present siting of the town is not easily determined. It is known that it was a typical Hertfordshire village not many years ago and, for a period, was on a stage coach route from London to the Midlands. (5)

The prime factor influencing Harpenden's growth during recent years has been its exceptionally attractive setting, which lent itself to good class residential development by business and professional people in London, St. Albans and Litton. '(6)

Another factor which has undoubtedly assisted the town's growth was the establishment prior to 1840 of the Rotharnsted Experimental Station; this has been developing progressively for the last eighty years. (7)

**Local Statistics**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Area (1951)... | 3,157 acres |
| Population Census 1951 | 14,236 |
| Rateable Value (1.4.51) | £142,007 |
| Product of Penny Rate (1951-2) | £570 |
| Rateable value per head of population (1951-52) | £9 19s. 8d. |

(8)

**Terms of Reference**

The Greater London Plan of 1944 included Harpenden in the Outer Country Ring and expressed the opinion that, being unsuitable for industrial purposes, it ought not to become a reception area for people moving out of London. • The desire to ensure that Harpenden retained its present character of compactness is exemplified in Sir Patrick Abercrombie's contention that the 1938 population of about 12,000 should not exceed 15,000 when the built-up area had been filled in and rounded off. . (9)

The Greater London Plan did not touch upon the system of communications in Harpenden except for, the general recommendation that all railway systems should be electrified. The Plan proposed a new system of main roads comprising a -number of radial roads and two new ring roads. These two ring roads would not affect Harpenden but two, of the radial roads were planned sufficiently nearby to warrant mention. To the east of Harpenden, actually between the village of Wheathampstead and Welwyn Garden City, a radial road to Edinburgh was proposed but has since been dropped. To the west of Harpenden, beyond Redbourn, the Birmingham radial road was proposed. This road is intended to link the London-Holyhead trunk road (route A.5 known as Watling Street) and the London-Inverness trunk road (A.6). When the Birmingham radial road is constructed the Luton road through Harpenden will lose much of its importance as a main traffic route. (10)

Regarding the future population of 15,000 proposed by the Greater London Plan, the former planning authority (the Mid-West Herts Joint Planning Committee) formed the opinion in 1946 that the population could well be raised to 20,000 because public services were available for a figure in excess of 15,000. and land of low agricultural value was available for accommodating the additional population. The Greater London Plan Regional Advisory Committee supported this view, which was confirmed in 1947 by the Minister of Town and Country Planning. (11)

The scheme of electrification proposed by Sir Patrick Abercrombie for the St. Pancras-Luton section of the London Midland Region of British Railways was fully endorsed by the 1949 Report of the London Plan Working Party of the British Transport Commission. This scheme, when carried out, will add considerably to the popularity of Harpenden as a good class dormitory town for London and, to a less extent, for Luton and St. Albans. ' (12)

The present Development Plan relates to the Urban District of Harpenden and part of the Rural District of St. Albans and is prepared by the Hertfordshire County Council as local planning authority under the Town and Country Planning Act 1947. In considering the proposals to be put before the Minister of Housing and Local Government as part of the County Development Plan, the County Council have kept in mind the acceptance' by the Government of the principles of the Greater London Plan, as subsequently amended, and these form the background of the present proposals. . (13)

The Plan for Harpenden has been prepared with a view to its realisation within the next twenty years and special consideration has been given to works likely to be carried out before 1958, by which date the first of the five-yearly reviews of the County Development Plan will have taken place. (14)

**PHYSICAL CONDITIONS AND LAND USE**

**General Historical Background**

Present-day Harpenden has grown from a relatively modern village on the main road London-St. Albans-Bedford and from a small hamlet along the banks of the River Lee into a pleasant and attractive town. Initially, the village and hamlet were largely agricultural in character with no mean amount of home industry in the form of straw plaiting for the hat makers of Luton and St. Albans.

Table III at the end of this Report shows the way in which the developed area of Harpenden is used at the present time and the alterations or additions to the area which will be carried out if the proposals of this Plan are accepted. Consideration is given below to each of the main land use items. (16)

# (i) Residential

Analysis of existing conditions

On June 30th, 1950 there were 4,367 dwellings accommodating an estimated population of14,550 i.e. 3.33. persons per dwelling. The gross density of the developed area of 1,423 acres is as j low as 10 persons per, acre and the gross density for the administrative, area of 3,157 acres is only . 4.6 persons per acre. (17)

The existing residential areas, with the areas which it is proposed to bring into residential use have been divided into eleven districts each containing development of a broadly similar type The districts are indicated on Land and Use Sm vey map and the To\ n Map Eacl carries a cartogram giving an index number, the gross population density in persons per acre and the approximate area of the district in acres. Statistical information relating to each of these districts is given in Tables I and IV, the index numbers of which correspond with those shown on the maps. (18)

In selecting these districts account has been taken, among other things, of the predominant type of house, location in respect of shopping centres and the availability of transport and public services. (19)

The net residential density for the gross residential area of 934 acres is 15.6 persons per acre. (20)

As is to be expected for a town that has grown gradually over a period of many years, there is a wide range of types of properties, the broad picture being somewhat as follows

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | No. of dwellings with an annual rateable value of: | Percent of total No of dwellings |
| (a) | £10 and under | 812 | 19 |
| (b) | £11-20 | 1,202 | 28 |
| (c) | £21-30 | 1,181 | 28 |
| (d) | £31-50 | 646 | 15 |
| (e) | £51-100 | 376 | 9 |
| (f) | £101 and over | 39 | 1 |
|  |  | 4,256 | 100 |

Note: About 110 dwellings are included with other premises for rating purposes and therefore not separately assessed.

These figures illustrate the good class residential character of the town, with 10 per cent of the houses exceeding £50 in annual rateable value and 25 per cent exceeding 30. (21)

Assessment of the additional land required for residential use must be based upon consideration of the following factors :-

(a) The extent of overcrowding and the number of families sharing accommodation in existing houses.

(b) The number of houses now obsolete or likely to become so within the next twenty years.

(c) The expansion of population by natural increase.

(d) The number of people working in the town and requiring accommodation.

(e) The number of houses required to accommodate additional population moving into the town as foreseen in the future population estimate of 20,000.

(22)

In December, 1950 the Urban District Council had a waiting list containing the names of 572 families requiring houses. At the present rate of construction of 100 houses a year it will take five or six years to meet this urgent need, assuming that no further names are added to the list. The District Council has sufficient land in view for this purpose. Not all the 572 applications represent families living in unsatisfactory houses or overcrowded conditions. Some investigation of the housing list has therefore been made and the relevant figures are incorporated in the paragraphs which follow. (23)

In order to obtain an indication of the present extent of overcrowding in the town the housing list has been combed and it is found that 476 of the applicants now live in the town. Of these, 81 inhabit houses which are unsatisfactory for structural or sanitary reasons; these are dealt with separately below. After making allowance for this factor it is likely that the remaining 395 applicants are living in overcrowded conditions or are sharing accommodation. Houses will need to be provided to enable this unsatisfactory situation to be remedied. (24)

Of the 4,367 dwellings referred to in paragraph 17 above few can be classified. as ,sub standard according to.-the requirements of the Housing Act The total number has yet to be exactly determined but it is unlikely to exceed 1OO. Properties of this character are scattered ,around the District in small numbers and are to be found mainly :in Cross and Heath Roads at Southdown, in Breadcroft Lane, Coidharbour Lane, near the "Red Cow" public house, in Lower Luton Road opposite Common Lane, in Leyton Green and behind "The Three Horseshoes “ public house. By using again such of the sites as are suitable about 40 houses could be built on the land previously occupied by. the 100 obsolete houses:

The Age and Condition of Buildings Survey shows that

(a) no buildings have suffered extensive war damage

(b) buildings likely to be scheduled for demolition under the Housing Acts are few and generally, are scattered

(c) buildings of architectural or historic interest and worthy of preservation are extremely few and

(d) there is a great preponderance of buildings in the town which were erected during the present century.

These facts show that the areas requiring early redevelopment are few.; secondly, that there are even fewer areas becoming obsolete but which still retain some years of useful life and thirdly, that most of the town is not likely to require redevelopment for very many years. (26)

From paragraphs 78-84 of this Report dealing with Population it will be, gathered that the Registrar-General estimates that Harpenden will grow in the next twenty years by about people. This estimate, based upon the population in 1947, indicates 'the extent to which births are likely to exceed deaths but no allowance is made for natural increase arising from immigrant population. The allowance made for new houses to satisfy this need can therefore be regarded as a minimum.(27)

There are known to be some people who now work in Harpenden but do not live in the town although they would wish to do so if it were possible. The .housing list contains the names of 32 people who give this reason for their application and there are doubtless others who are not on the local housing list of whom no estimate can be made. (28)

To the local housing figure must be added an estimate of the number of houses required to accommodate immigrants needed to raise the size of the town from its present 14,550 to the accepted 20,000 population in twenty years (after making allowance for the increases in population which will arise, as mentioned in the previous paragraphs). . (29)

In terms of population requiring houses on new sites the residential requirements of Harpenden can be summarised as follows (assuming an average family size of 3.4 persons) --

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| (1) Relief of Overcrowding |  |  |
| Housing list applicants living in Harpenden... | 395 |  |
|  | 3.4 |  |
| Population to be catered for |  | 1,343 |
| (ii) Reconstruction of obsolete houses |  |  |
| Obsolete houses .: | 100 |  |
| Less sites to be re-used | 40 |  |
|  | 60 |  |
|  | 3.4 |  |
| Population to be catered for |  | 204 |
| Population to be catered for ...... |  |  |
| (iii) Natural increase in population ..... |  | 730 |
| (iv). Non-resident workers (32 x 3. 4) . |  | 100 |
| (v) Immigrant Population. |  |  |
| Difference between present and future population | 5,450 |  |
| Less (iii) and (iv) above | 830 |  |
|  | 4,620 | 4,620 |
| Total population to be catered for: |  | 6,997 |
|  |  |  |

**(30)**

**Proposals**

The general structure of the residential standards which it is hoped to achieve in ach of the eleven residential districts of the town will be, obtained by studying the Town Map and Tables I and IV at the end of this Report. . . (31)

As Harpenden consists mainly of fairly modern houses there is little need or opportunity to alter the existing density of houses and population in the present residential areas of the town. Although there is some tendency for large houses to be used for the accommodation of more than a single family this increase in occupation is not sufficiently great to have any noticeable effect upon population densities measured over the residential districts as units. The population needing houses in the town will therefore have to be accommodated on land not n6win residential use.

(32)

Within the present built-up area of the town there are 96 acres of land which could be available for house building. The use of this land, which is in a number of separate areas ineveral parts, of the town, will make a substantial contribution towards the residential land requirements of tie town without any outward expansion being necessary. (33)

Additional land outside the present built-up area is available principally on four estates at Batford, the Grove, West Common and Wood End Farm. (34)

Planning permissions and approved estate layouts cover substantially the whole of the land in the four estates mentioned. The modifications which have been made to the approved estate plans bring each into line with the principles of the Greater London Plan and the proposals of this Plan. (35)

The use of this land, totalling 317 acres, together with the 96 acres within the built-up area will satisfy the requirements for residential land indicated in paragraph 30 above on the assumption that development takes place at densities which are consistent with existing development of similar character in Harpenden. The densities which should be adopted for development in each of the main new residential areas are set out below

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Batford Estate | 51 acres | @ 20 persons per acre | 1,020 |
| Grove Estate | 64 | @ 20 persons per acre | 1,285 |
| West Common Estate | 110 | @ 10 persons per acre | 1,100 |
| Wood End Farm Estate... | 39 | @ 20 persons per acre | 780 |
| Wood End Farm Estate... | 53 | @ 16 persons per acre | 84 |
| Infilling in built-up area... | 73 | @ 20 persons per acre. | 1,460 |
| Infilling in built-up area ... | 23 | @ 16 persons per acre | 364 |
|  | 413 acres | Persons | 6,857 |

(36)

Fact and theory alike indicate that the planned expansion of Harpenden should be devised so as to, knit the existing urban structure together. There is not room between. the main roads and railway lines for any loosely woven pattern of neighbourhood units. The town has no wards, and it is questionable whether any can be created, or are desirable, around such localities as Batford, Southdown, West Common, the Central or the Northern areas. . (37)

Many of the factors stated in this summary of residential conditions in Harpenden support the thèis that the town is unsuitable for the reception of population from London in large housing estates. The town has developed rapidly (and on the whole satisfactorily) in recent years through the voluntary migration of families from neighbouring large towns and there is no reason to suppose that this type of expansion will not continue. The number of towns in southern and central Hertfordshire which can make a substantial contribution in this way to the decentralisation of London is very limited. Harpenden is probably the most attractive of them and should be allowed to play its full part in accord with its established character. (38)

# (ii) Shops and Offices

There are about 193 shops and 33 offices in Harpenden with a total road frontage of ,3 ,537 feet and occupying about 9 acres 136 of these shops are in the central area In addition there are 25 licensed premises in the Urban District (9)

These facilities are mainly confined to the central business area in the High Street and Station Road and in three subsidiary centres in Southdown Road at Batford and along he Luton Road in North Harpenden.,(40)

*Proposals*

The proposals for shops are concerned primarily with building up the subsidiary ceitres to serve the increased population, with slight additions and improvements to the main centre in the High Street area.(41)

Using the Greater London Plan recommendation of 75-100 persons per shop, the town would in future require between 200 and 267 shops, probably the latter figure being more likely. (42)

Provision can be made in the central area of the town for about twenty new shops when redevelopment permits. (43)

The Batford neighbourhood with about 1,500 persons on the Council housing estate will require not less than 15 new shops. (44)

The Southdown Road area has only one properly designed parade of shops, and, whilst it is presumed that the converted cottages Will in time be rebuilt as shops, a further ten shops will be required here. (45)

By "rounding off" existing development in the Roundwood Lane area in North Harpenden about 1,600 people will be provided for with possibly, a need for about ten new shops in the Luton Road locality. (46)

The completion of the West Common estate should give rise to a need for not more than four shops preferably associated with the existing business premises at Hatching Green (47)

The existing office accommodation is necessarily somewhat restricted chiefly because of the limited demand Excluding the Council Offices the total area is just under three acres The future expansion of Harpenden to accommodate 20,000 people will create a demnd for more office floor space and the Plan anticipates this demand by offering an alternative use of the larger and older residential properties in Arden Grove. (48)

(iii) Churches and Cemeteries

*Churches*

Harpenden possesses 22 Churches, Chapels and Church Halls. Collectively, they occupy some 8 acres of land reasonably well disposed round the town. The variety of denominations, Church of England, Baptist, Methodist, Catholic, Congregational and Christian Scientist are sufficiently representative to meet the reasonable requirements of the existing town. The ix largest churches provide seating for2,500 persons. All the churches have been erected within the last. 100 years, although. the tower to the Parish Church of St. Nicholas dates back to the 15th century. The Greater London Plan expresses the opinion that in planning for churches, provision should be made for about 10 per cent of the population. On this basis Harpenden is already well provided for but as the local ratio has always been about 20 per cent it is reasonable to make provision for a percentage in excess of 10 if not as high as 20 (49)

*Proposals*

The present centre of new development at Batford and the suggested development areas at Roundwood Lane, West Common and at the Grove Estate will create new needs of their own. The first of these areas that at Batford has already received detailed consideration by the Diocesan Re-Organisation Committee and arrangements have been made to reserve a church site. (50)

On a similar basis, an adequate number of sites can be provided for religious purposes within the remaining areas for new development should the need arise. (51)

*Cemeteries*

In. 1922 the Urban District Council acquired 12 acres of land for cemetery purposes in Westfield Road; a Garden of Rest is also proposed. Not all of 'this land has been dedicated for burial purposes. A limited number of burials still take place in the churchyard of the parish church of St. Nicholas. (52)

*Proposals.*

These provisions are adequate for the town for a period of years in excess of twenty. (53)

# (iv) Cinemas and Theatres

Harpenden does not possess a theatre, because the size of the town could hardly support one. When the town reaches its future population there will probably still be too few people to support a theatre, even including residents of the surrounding villages. The present need for these facilities is met by the London theatres and the one at Luton. (54)

The two existing cinemas, the Embassy and the Regent, with a total seating capacity, of 1,183, meet the present requirements. This is proved by the fact that the programmes are generally changed twice weekly. , . (55)

*Proposals*

It may well be that provision should be made for a further, small cinema to satisfy the potential needs of a fully developed town and of the nearby villages. It is understood that the industry agrees with this view. '(56)

From the planning standpoint only, the position for an additional cinema should be in the central area because (a) the size and proportions of cinemas are such as to lend emphasis to the civic importance of the central area, (b) public transport services are best in the central area. (57)

# (v) Other Public Buildings

The Public Hall is the town's most important public building. It is a modern building comprising two halls with a total seating capacity of 590, and is in great demand. (58)

Apart from the Old Public Hall (temporarily used by the Ministries of Food and National Insurance) and the Post Office building in Station Road, there are several other public buildings such as halls and club premises' of all types to meet the requirements of Scouts, Guides and local organisations. (59)

Proposals

Similar facilities for minor public buildings should be provided in the new centres of residential development, and whilst specific proposals are not made for each new centre, at the present time this is largely because club premises and other communal facilities are unlikely to be 'provided or 'required within the next five years.' (60)

The Fire Service and the Police Station are at present in buildings inadequate for their purposes and when capital expenditure is again feasible for such buildings they will need replacement. Some extension of the Fire Station is likely to take place in the near future. (61)

As a long term project, the Ministry of Works will require a new site for a building,-to accommodate jointly the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of National Insurance. A building of this type. would lend character to the proposals now put. forward for creating a true Civic Centre around the northern apex of Harpenden Common. (62)

# (vi) Open Spaces

The Land Use Survey for Harpenden discloses that the town is well supplied with areas over which the public have unrestricted access. The total acreage is 288 and, excluding the 18-hole golf course on Harpenden Common, within this figure there are 73 acres allocated for organised games and children's playgrounds. (63)

Rothamsted Park of 56 acres was acquired by the District Council in 1940 to meet the • principal demand for organised games and a layout scheme has. been approved. (64)

The Greater London Plan standard of open space provision for a town of 20,000 is :-

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Parks and Gardens | 20 acres |  |
| School Playing Fields | 60 |  |
| Playing Fields | 120 | of which 40 acres may be private playing. fields; |

(65)

Proposals

The present dispoition of public playing fields, at Rothamsted Park, Batford, Westfield and on Harpenden Common, is broadly satisfactory. An area of 7 acres should, however, be provided at Batford for open space. Provision has accordingly been made in the Plan. (66)

As regards private playing fields, the gross area is about 146 acres if Hammondsend Golf Course is included. Excluding the golf course, the deficiency is 29 acres. With two golf courses, and one of them on the very fringe of the town, it is reasonable to exclude one, especially as a golf course can only meet the requirements of a limited number of people compared with, say, those who enjoy the Rugby Football ground in Overstone Road. (67)

This deficiency of 29 acres should, therefore, be made good partly in the several areas proposed for development and partly as a means of realising an extensive recreational area in the valley of the Lee;(68)

The Common, alone, more than meets the assumed standard for parks but public gardens, as such, are practically non-existent. The Harpenden Lodge estate in Sun Lan has been subject of an agreement under Section 34 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1932 for some years, restricting its use to private open space and as the estate has an area of 12.5 acres the agreement should not be revoked. (69.)

# (vii) Allotment Gardens

For some years now the District Council have pursued an energetic policy in providing allotments on their housing estates. (70)

The Council now own eleven permanent allotment grounds providing about 470 plots on 28 .75 acres. In addition, there are three private permanent allotment grounds .with 325 plots on 29.2 acres. (71)

Of temporary allotments on Council property, there are 92 plots on 7 acres in four separate grounds. Only one of these., an acre site in Marquis Lane, is likely to become permanent. (72)

Temporary allotments on private property by agreement or under requisition at present total 157. Their acreage is 10.63 and the number of sites is nine. (73)

Of the grand total of 1,044 plots no less than 870 are let. In view of the fact that nearly 250 plots are temporary and that allotments are popular in Harpenden, it is essential that provision should be made for their replacement near new centres of development. (74)

Proposals

If it is assumed that the present demand, i.e. one plot for every 14 persons, will not lessen during the next few years provision should be made for some 1,400 plots, or nearly twice the existing number of permanent allotments. The proportion of persons per plot is exceptionally high and it is doubtful whether more can be done than to provide for a number of permanent allotments equal to the existing permanent and temporary ones combined. The need for allotments is being met as estates are developed by the Urban District Council. Similar needs elsewhere in the town have likewise to be met in detailing layouts for development in these areas. By these means, there should be no difficulty in providing an acreage equal to the existing temporary allotments. (75)

# (viii) Land Unsuitable for Building

*Existing Conditions*

Land within the Urban District that is unsuitable for building is very limited, being entirely confined to the valley of the River Lee, primarily between the river 'and the Lower Luton Road. (76)

*Possibility of reclamation or re-use*

Part of this Lee Valley area has shack or semi-shack types of building on it and these should be removed as opportunity presents itself. The greater proportion of these lands are suitable and capable of adaptation for playing fields, riverside walks and water meadows. The District Council have expressed their intention to leave this part of, the river .valley largely unbuilt-upon and only to take positive action to secure these ends .should such a course be necessary in order to prevent building development, taking place. . (77)

POPULATION

*Early Records of size of settlement*

Few records .are available of the size of the settlements from which the town grew. The original settlements were grouped at various points around Harpenden Common, particularly around the apex of the triangular-shaped Common, at Bowling Alley in the east, and Hatching Green in the west. (78)

Detailed figures from 1901 to date including sex and age structures

The details of population and population changes from 1901 for the town, including the years 1931, 1938 and 1947 are contained in Table II. The Census of 1901 disclosed that the population was 4,958 and that since then it has increased steadily to 14,550. It is worth noting that in 1939, before' the Government evacuation .scheme was put into operation, the resident population was 11,940 and that during the peak of the evacuation period the population slightly exceeded 19,000. Figures for 1939 should be however regarded with reserve for it is believed that evacuees had already started to move into the 'town before the National Register was compiled. (79)

The 1939 Register figures clearly show the effect of evacuation. The "under 15 "group is over 3 per cent above comparable figures for the County and Urban Districts 'generally and the "over 65 " group is also greater than the average. (80)

