

**9. Cross Street** No. 4 Cross Street was designed by Gilbert Fraser for the Concrete Machinery Company of Liverpool and won a prize for the best concrete cottage. The textured blocks were manufactured on site. Note No. 2 with its porch seats (below).

*Turn left into Icknield Way*

**10. Icknield Way** Mr Barrett, who designed 219, Icknield Way and 1, The Quadrant, claimed to have lived with a labourer, 'to study his requirements'. Included in his design was a separate parlour, so that if the vicar happened to call unexpectedly he would not be treated to wet undergarments hanging up to dry. He also included a wooden porch, where the husband might smoke his pipe, in peace, of an evening and 'after she has cleared up and put the children to bed, his wife may join him'.



No. 221 by Bennet & Bidwell 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in Cheap Cottages Exhibition. Dark-stained weatherboarding reflects local vernacular materials.

No. 219 by Barrett & Driver – adaptation of Voysey.

No. 217 1<sup>st</sup> prize winner in 1905. By Percy Houfton, a Yorkshire architect who designed colliery villages.

*(Optional longer route via Norton Common from here)  
Left into The Quadrant and right into Nevells Road*

**11. Nevells Road Nursery School** on site of huts 1904-5 housing London unemployed who built the first roads. Later used as 1905 Exhibition Hall, then the first school and, briefly, the Spirella Company.

*Cross Bridge Road to the Spirella Building (café)*

**12. Spirella Company** (HE Register II\*) 1912-22 designed by Cecil Hignett, a former P&U assistant. 'Castle Corset' was built for William Kincaid as a corset factory and later manufactured military parachutes. A sympathetic recent restoration included the creation of a well-appointed tranquil garden, visible from the surrounding offices, yet intimate.



*Continue up Bridge Road to the roundabout. Veer left onto Station Way and turn right into Broadway (above)*

**13. Broadway** HE Register II; restored in 2011/12 with Lottery Funds. P&U's green spinal boulevard planted from south and north with avenues of trees leading to the Town Square. The roundabout at the far end of Broadway is claimed to be the first in England.

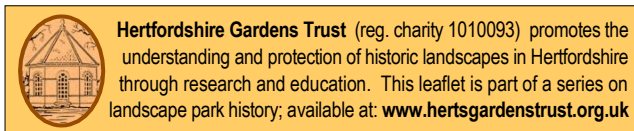
Broadway Hotel by Sidney Clark, 1960 – 1<sup>st</sup> cocktail bar in Letchworth; Post Office (opposite hotel), Bennett & Bidwell, 1912, extended 1937.

*Cross the road ahead into the Central Square.*

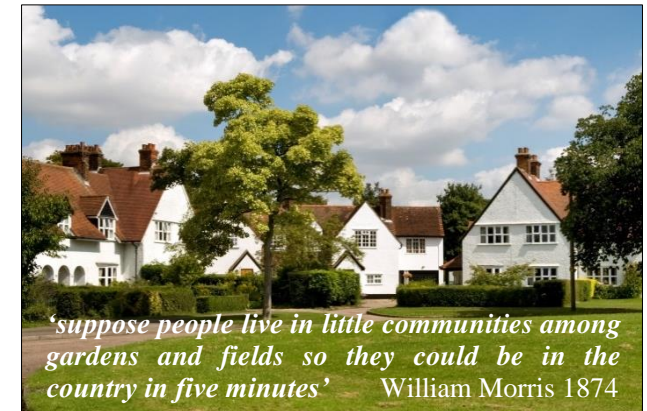
**14. Central Square** HE Register II. The formal square was surrounded by Lombardy poplars planted in 1914 to indicate the outline of the planned religious and civic buildings, which never materialised. The continuation of Broadway ahead shows Unwin's urban planning innovations of tree-lined avenues with verges and also his open road junctions to maximise views and the feeling of space. The pioneering ideas of segregating residential, commercial & manufacturing properties into separate zones were widely adopted and have become the norm in many countries.

Library by Crickmer, 1938/62; Town Hall and Art Deco cinema by Bennett & Bidwell, 1935.

*Cross to Gernon Road for return to original car park. Shops and cafés along Eastcheap and Leys Avenue.*



## HGT 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Walks Letchworth Garden City



*Arts & Crafts at Westholm Green, Parker & Unwin, 1906*

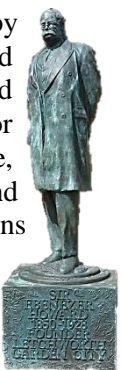
**Parking:** Car Park off Hillshot by Mrs Howard Memorial Hall SG6 1NX (P on map). If full, there is a multi-storey off Gernon Road opposite Hillshot.

**Refreshments:** Lots of restaurants and cafés, but a good midway break is the café on the ground floor of the Spirella Building (12).

**Length:** 2 miles (*longer walk available in diversion across Norton Common to Westholm and Eastholm Greens, then down Norton Road North, right into Icknield Way and re-join the route at The Quadrant*)

**Difficulty:** Mostly flat and on pavements.

Letchworth Garden City was conceived by Ebenezer Howard with overall planning and execution by cousins Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin to provide a place for healthy living with all amenities available, combining the benefit of both country and town. Many early houses had ample gardens for vegetable patches. Houses were often set in groups round village greens. Howard's original book was re-issued as 'Garden Cities of Tomorrow' in 1902.





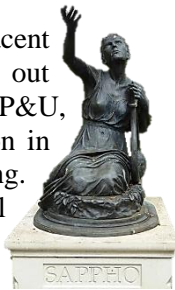
**1. (P) Mrs Howard Memorial Hall** Letchworth's first public building, built by public subscription in memory of Lizzie Howard, Ebenezer's first wife. It was no larger than a village hall, reflecting the initial size of Letchworth. Social and political centre with a library, and putting on plays and musical evenings.

Leave **P** by the steps, turn left and walk south along Norton Way South to the thatched house on your left.

**2. First City Museum** Designed by Parker in 1907 as Letchworth office of Parker & Unwin (P&U). It is a vernacular version of the thatched medieval hall house and became the drawing office. The solar, at a higher level, was Parker's private office with a discreet window to keep an eye on the assistants.

Continue south to the roundabout and bear left into Pixmore Way. After a few yards, turn left into Howard Gardens on a small path.

**3. Howard Gardens** and the adjacent Howard Park to the north were laid out 1904-11 to an informal design by P&U, and restored at a cost of £2.7 million in 2011/12 with Heritage Lottery Funding. HE Register grade II. The original Sappho statue was stolen in the 1990s and replaced during the restoration.



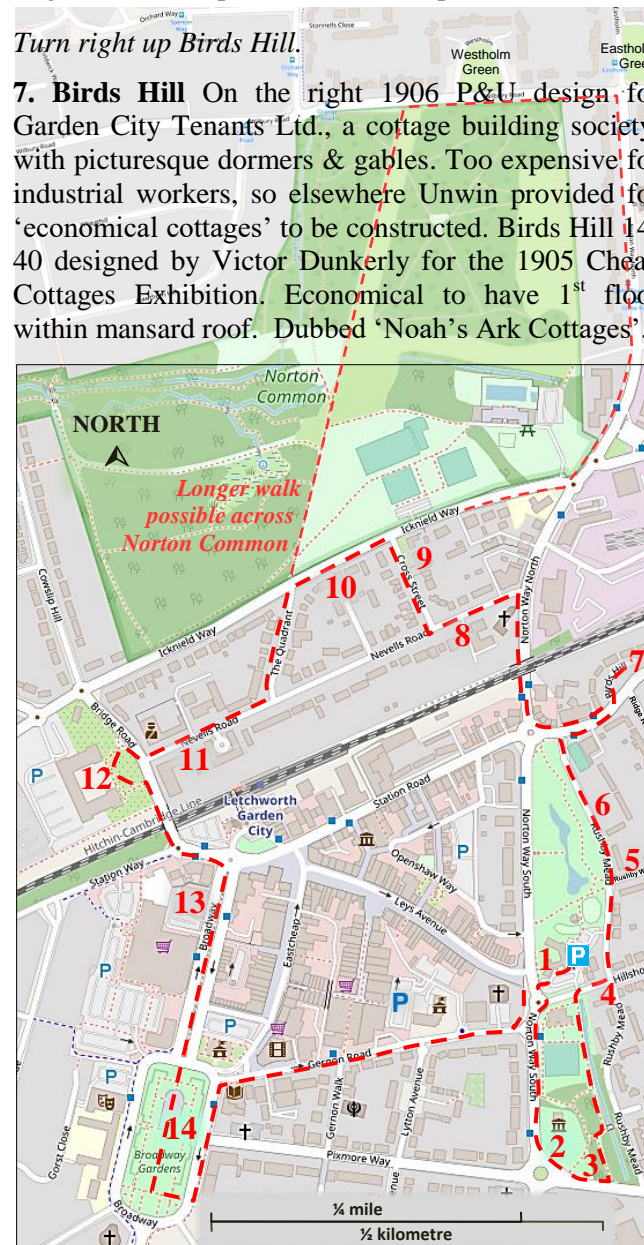
At northern end of the Gardens, turn right into Hillshot and then left into Rushby Mead.



**4. Hillshot** No. 4 and 6 (north side of junction with Rushby Mead) by Courtenay Crickmer, 1906; typical of his early work with timber studwork in the projecting 'M' gable. To preserve visibility at the junction, P&U set back 2, Hillshot and 101, Rushby Mead, leaving a square garden between.

**5. Rushby Walk** A pioneer cul-de-sac. To the right are two groups by Courtenay Crickmer with bold black weather-boarded gables. Ahead and to the left are houses by P&U and to the left of the entrance to Rushby Mead are cottages by Bennet and Bidwell.

**6. Rushby Mead** has some of the finest houses of the early Garden City, developed by Howard Cottage Society. No.2-24 are set back behind long strips designed as vegetable plots and now an informal mix of gardens under private and municipal maintenance.



Turn right up Birds Hill.

**7. Birds Hill** On the right 1906 P&U design for Garden City Tenants' Ltd., a cottage building society, with picturesque dormers & gables. Too expensive for industrial workers, so elsewhere Unwin provided for 'economical cottages' to be constructed. Birds Hill 14-40 designed by Victor Dunkerly for the 1905 Cheap Cottages Exhibition. Economical to have 1<sup>st</sup> floor within mansard roof. Dubbed 'Noah's Ark Cottages'.



7. 'Noah's Ark Cottages', Birds Hill

Return downhill to roundabout, turn right into Norton Way North. Use road crossing. Continue under the railway bridge and take first left into Nevells Road.

**8. Nevells Road** earlier Exhibition Road and the site of the 1905 Cheap Cottages Exhibition, showing various innovative techniques and materials with the aim of building affordable houses to a high standard, and for less than £150 each.



Most of the 121 entries, mainly located between the railway and Norton Common, have survived and display great diversity within the design principles advocated by Unwin. Thus, rooms are light and airy; each plot is generously proportioned and set along spacious tree-lined roads with wide pavements separated from the carriageway by broad grass verges. The overall effect of calm informal order and harmony contrasts with primitive, gloomy Victorian dwellings, and cheap, mean post-war housing stock.

The Settlement. Formerly the Skittles Inn, 1907 by P&U, with the Skittle Alley added in 1909. It was established as an old-fashioned alcohol-free inn offering temperance beverages such as Bournville Drinking Chocolate. The inn became a centre for local activities and education. A 1950s bowling alley was extended to form Kincaid Hall, part-financed by a legacy from a founder of the Spirella Company.

Turn right into Cross Street which has more of the Cottages from the 1905 Exhibition.