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FEATURES OF THE MIMRAM VALLEY

A supporting document to The Outline Case for Local Landscape Designation

Please note that this document is primarily intended for browsing on a PC or tablet to allow for adequate examination of the detail by zooming-in. Some of the pages (notably the Visual Assets map at the final page) are best displayed at A3 size for adequate definition, printing of which on A4 paper may be problematic. If a printed version is required, please ensure the paper size for those pages is set to A3 (if your printer will support).

STATUS NOTE

This paper has been prepared by members of the project team experienced in the subject matter. It has not been prepared specifically as 'evidence' in planning practice terms and may be the subject of revision and updates. Views expressed in this report are those of the authors unless otherwise stated.

See also:

Herts Historic Environment Record: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/bd8b25113fd64f308f63594ef00fc877/page/Page>

Historic England: <https://historicengland.org.uk/>

and the Project Bibliography

Author:	MVL Project Team; detail from Boundary Mapping Version 1: 27/02/2026, taken from Parish Online	Version 2 Mar 2026
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This supporting document to the *Outline Case for Local Landscape Designation*, provides additional detail for that *Case*. It contains maps and details of many of the interesting (heritage, ecological and visually attractive) features and assets, within the Mimram Valley. It contains photographs of features and views, that showcase the visual display that the Valley affords, but it is a compilation and not intended to be exhaustive:

- ❖ Map of the Overall Valley
- ❖ Maps together with summaries of:
 - Registered and Unregistered Parks and Gardens
 - Ancient Woodlands (i.e. areas that have existed as woodland since 1600AD)
 - Local Wildlife Sites (as recorded by the Hertfordshire Environmental Record Centre)
 - Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings and Above Ground Structures)¹
 - Local Viewpoints
 - Visual Assets along the Valley

More detail on any aspect can easily be sourced from the Internet and in many cases specific websites relating to the feature.

The name "Mimram" is believed to be of Celtic origin. Generally, etymologists and philologists have found the name 'Mimram' hard to analyse as there has been so little raw material on which to work until well into the Saxon era, by which time multiple forms of the name appear in records. Historically, the river has also been known by the name "Maran" and many maps from the C19 and early C20 mark the river's name as "Mimram or Maran". Indeed, up until the 1960s and 1970s, most local residents referred the area around it as the *Maran* Valley rather than the *Mimram* Valley. At Digswell Water there is a C16 property with the name "*Maran House*". It has been speculated that "*Maran*" may hark back to the homelands of the Catuvellauni: Celts who came to Hertfordshire from a region of modern-day Belgium and Northern France where the main river is the Marne.

The Mimram Valley does not have striking rock formations or a major waterfall, such as in the Lakes, the Peaks or Dartmoor, but it does have fine countryside for gentle walking and quality pubs and restaurants in the villages and hamlets. The countryside is usually described as "rolling" with its gentle undulations and low hills, often topped with woodland. Most of the area is criss-crossed with tracks, foot and bridle paths, and cycle routes. The area is a mix of open parkland, arable farmland and woodland (both ancient

¹ For detail and description of any specific asset, please refer to the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record Viewer

woodland and relatively new plantation activity), with evidence of limited industrial activity such as chalk quarrying or gravel extraction. All of this activity in the valley has now ceased and in notable cases (e.g. Panshanger Park) the land has been restored.

It also has a wealth of interesting locations:

There were at least 12 mills (some corn grinding, others cloth “fulling”) along the river that were established at the time of Domesday Book. Although all milling has now ceased, many of the mill buildings are still present, now private dwellings (e.g. at Whitwell, Kimpton, Codicote, Welwyn and Digswell Water). This is evidence of the volume of water that the river sustained before excessive abstraction lowered the water level; now excessive abstraction has ceased, the river’s healthy flow has returned.

The large estates that once dominated the landscape from Georgian times began to diminish in the late Victorian era, when land became popular (and valuable to the owners) for town and village growth. It often meant the virtual disappearance of some estates, such that today only the original house remains; even some of those were demolished prior to the C20 by their owners. The Great War brought heavy loss to these families; reduction in estate size was inevitable, with land being sold off for housing development, in many cases to pay death duties. However, some houses still remain in their original parkland, or the reduced remains of such (e.g. the fine country houses at Stagenhoe, St Paul’s Walden, Danesbury, Lockleys and Tewin Water).

The limited built environment is rich in designated heritage assets, with houses, pubs and shops variously from Tudor, Jacobean, Georgian and Victorian eras (notably at Whitwell, Codicote, The Ayots, Welwyn, Digswell and Hertingfordbury, with others scattered in between). There are several conservation areas in the villages and hamlets (e.g. Whitwell, Bendish, Welwyn, Hertingfordbury). There are many long-established churches in the villages, including the notable ruins at Ayot St Lawrence (Old Church) and the late C18 “replacement”, itself Grade I-listed. The route of the Great Northern Railway traverses the valley with the Italianate Welwyn North Station and the superb Digswell viaduct in the centre of the valley. There are also the scheduled monuments of Welwyn’s Dickett Mead villa complex with its notable Roman Baths. Scrutiny of the Hertfordshire Historic Environment Record shows the wealth of Iron Age and Roman artifacts excavated in the area, many of which are now in the British Museum.

With one SSSI (Tewinbury) within the valley (and another Sherrardspark Woods) just outside the boundary; 4 designated Local Nature Reserves (Willowmead, Archers Green, Danesbury Park and Singlers Marsh); 1 private reserve (Digswell Lake) and over 70 Local Wildlife Sites, the valley is greatly important from an ecological perspective, offering rare grassland and ancient tree habitats for bats, wading birds, water voles and numerous other species. Most of these locations are easily reached from the local settlements.

PARKS AND GARDENS

The information on registered and unregistered Parks and Gardens (below) was populated from the Herts Historic Environment Record.

Kings Walden Bury

Stagenhoe

St Paul's Walden Bury (Registered)

Hoo Park, Kimpton

Ayot House (Registered)

Ayot Bury Park

Ayot Place Gardens

Danesbury Park

Lockleys (Sherrardswood School)

Digswell park

Tewin Water Park (Registered)

Marden Hill.

Panshanger Park (Registered)

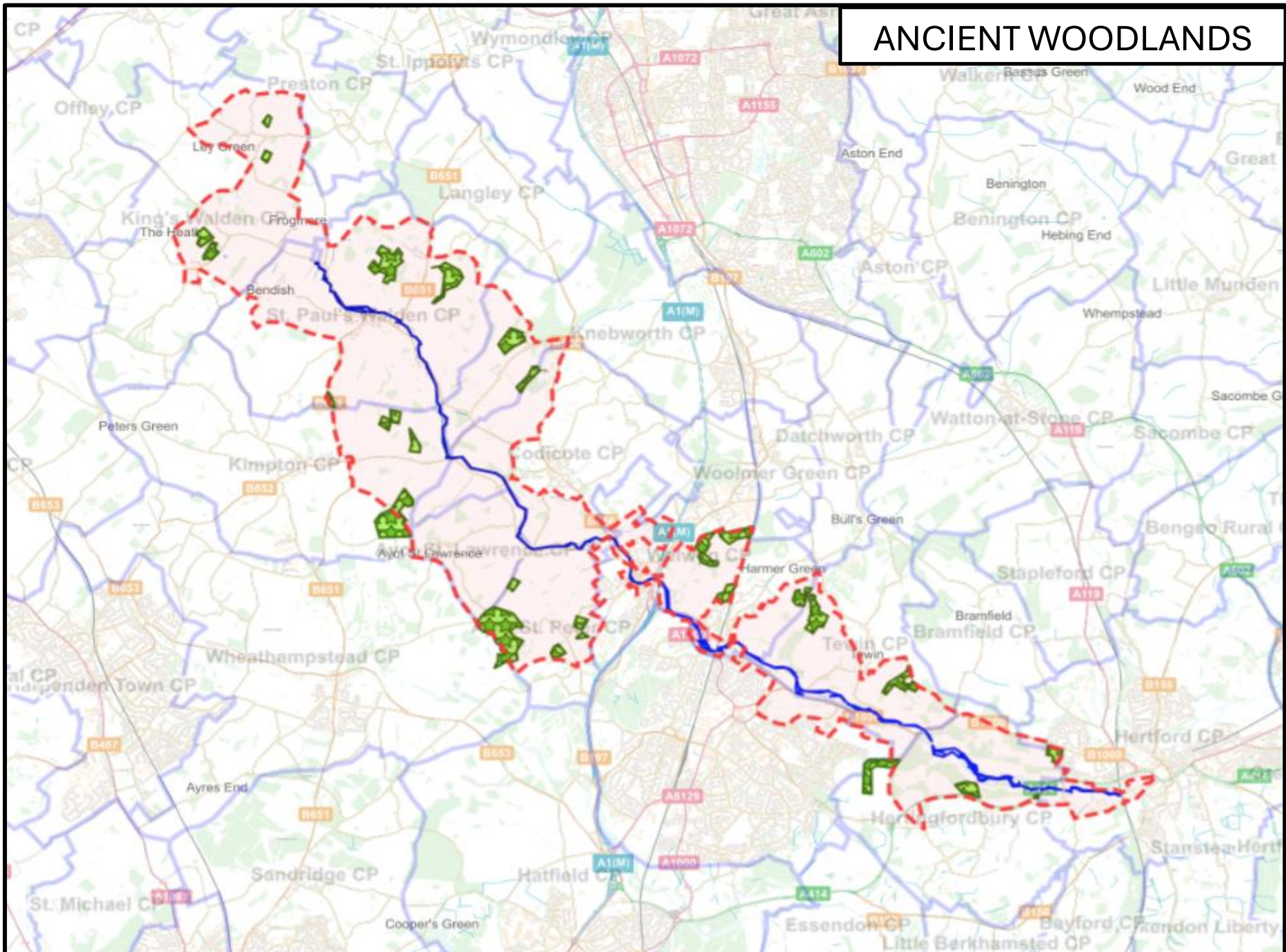
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Hertingfordbury Rectory

Hertingfordbury Park.

Some of the above are also Local Nature Reserves or Local Wildlifeites

ANCIENT WOODLANDS



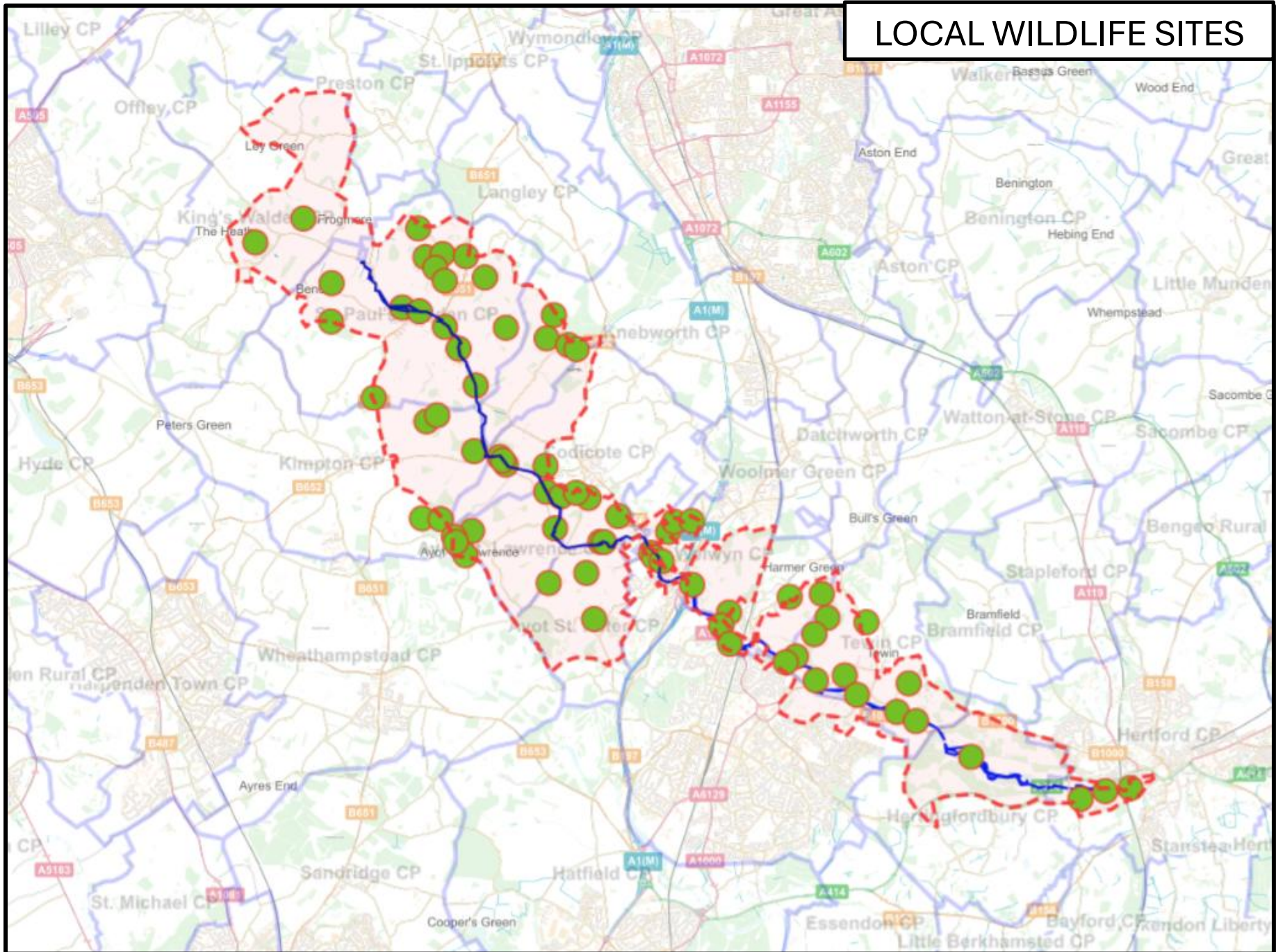
ANCIENT WOODLAND

The information on sites of Ancient Woodland (below) was supplied by the Herts Environmental Records Centre (HERC). This dataset is regularly maintained and this information may go out of date. For up to date information please contact HERC (www.hercinfo.org.uk).

- Small sites <1ha are excluded
- For clarity, only the larger sites are represented on the map.

Site Name	Grid Reference	Area_(ha)	Site Name	Grid Reference	Area_(ha)
Warren Wood (S.W. of Rusling End)	TL200208	1.5	Saul's Wood	TL217148	5
Church Wood (Knebworth)	TL215205	1.5	Node Wood	TL211199	6
Copse by Codicote Lodge	TL209185	2	Lockleys Wood	TL246158	7.5
Christmas Wood	TL176195	2	Marden Hill Park Woodland	TL277142	10.5
Westley Wood	TL264143	2	Watkins Wood & Lords Wood	TL154224	13.5
Round Spring (Ayot St Peter)	TL202157	2	Chalkleys & Little Bury Woods (St Paul's Walden)	TL186222	14
Crouchgreen Woods	TL212205	2.5	Henry and Birchall Woods	TL276126	16
Hurstling's Wood	TL209160	3	Reynold's Wood & Clagdell Spring	TL198218	16
Longston and Catchpole Woods	TL222172	3	Holl Lays Wood	TL208207	16
Rectory Wood (Ayot St Peter)	TL221153	4	Dawley Wood	TL263154	19
Reynard Spring & Arnold's Spring	TL232179	4	Dowdell's Wood, Bladder Wood, Warren Wood	TL207151	49
Cooks Wood	TL259158	5			

LOCAL WILDLIFE SITES




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The information on Local Wildlife Sites (below) was supplied by the Herts Environmental Records Centre (HERC). This dataset is regularly maintained and this information may go out of date. For up-to-date information please contact HERC (www.hercinfo.org.uk). LWS < 1ha and sites of Ancient Woodland have been excluded for clarity and brevity. Details of Ancient Woodlands are given elsewhere in this document.

Name of Site	Grid Reference	Area (ha)	Notes	Name of Site	Grid Reference	Area (ha)	Notes
Water Hall Marsh	TL185211	1	Wetland	Whitwell Watercress Beds	TL181212	3	Wetland
Shaw's Corner	TL193165	1	Grassland	Rose Farm Meadows	TL189208	3	Grassland
Scrub Slope E. of Digswell	TL242154	1	Grassland	Hollards Farm Meadow	TL218176	3	Wetland
Linces Bank	TL216162	1	Grassland	Digswell Meadows S	TL241151	4	Grassland
Codicote Bottom Farm Meadow	TL211177	1	Grassland	Grassland E. of Danesbury Hospital	TL236172	4	Grassland
Walk Wood Meadow	TL189222	1	Grassland	Hertingfordbury Park, Lower Pastures	TL314120	4	Grassland; Wetland
Willowmead	TL315121	1	Wetland	Mimram Valley Marsh	TL217168	5	Wetland
Lockleys Wood Meadow	TL247158	1.5	Grassland	Duck Trap Wood	TL195195	5.5	Wetland
Codicote Bottom Pastures,	TL202182	2	Grassland	Dawley Warren	TL259151	7	Grassland
Ayot St Lawrence Grassland	TL192168	2	Grassland	Heath Plantation Main	TL206182	9	Grassland
Cole Green Grassland	TL281115	2	Grassland	Cole Green Way	TL286111	9	Grassland
Meadow & River Lea by Leahoe Viaduct	TL320122	2.5	Grassland	Kimpton Mill	TL194184	10	Grassland
Meadow N.W. of First Spring	TL215177	3	Grassland	Blackfan Valley	TL254138	13	Grassland

VIEWPOINTS ALONG THE MIMRAM VALLEY




The viewpoints shown on the map and detailed here are only a selection. They are mainly rural scenes and serve to emphasise the open nature of the rolling countryside along the length of the valley, away from the villages, with only hamlets, isolated houses and narrow roads. They show how the valley is unspoilt by industry or major building in spite of its proximity to large towns (e.g. Stevenage, Hitchin, Welwyn Garden City, Hertford) and to London. The viewpoints are all accessible from footpaths or reasonable tracks and in most cases, from roads, although following the footpaths will reveal other vistas. In many cases a simple drive along the country roads (notably the B651, B656 and B1000), will reveal the open nature of the valley, although a slow careful drive along the many undesignated roads will reveal more features. In the table below, the serial numbers refer to the designations for each viewpoint on the map. There are also additional scenes (notably the village centres of Whitwell and Welwyn and several of the Local Nature Reserves) shown in the section “Visual Assets across the Mimram Valley”

No.	View	Location	Grid Ref	Direction	Features
1		Kings Walden Pumping Station	TL154233	SE	Across Church Road and along the valley
2		Stagenhoe Park	TL184228	S/SW	Towards valley and Whitwell village




3		Near Lord's Wood (Breachwood Green)	TL157225	ESE	Down valley towards river source
4		Whitwell water tower	TL178208	NW	Along valley towards King's Walden village
5		Track to Hoo End from B651	TL178198	SE	Towards the river and Kimpton Mill

6		Hoo Park Cottages	TL185195	SE	Towards B652 and Kimpton Mill
7		Three Houses Farm	TL204197	NW	Towards Whitwell
8		Tanyard Lane, Codicote	TL197176	N	Towards the river at Kimpton Mill



9		The Green, Codicote	TL207185	W	Across Codicote Heath, along valley towards Kimpton Mill and Kimpton village
10		Codicote, near lower ford	TL211176	NNW	Along valley towards Codicote Bottom and Codicote Mill
11		Long Valley, Codicote	TL213177	SE	Along the river valley towards Welwyn village, showing the undulating countryside

12		Footpath near ford, Codicote	TL199185	W	Kimpton Mill from footpath
13		Ayot St Peter	TL214154	Local view	Old Churchyard
14		Footpath near Linces farm	TL219163	E	Across river and valley towards Lockley Farm

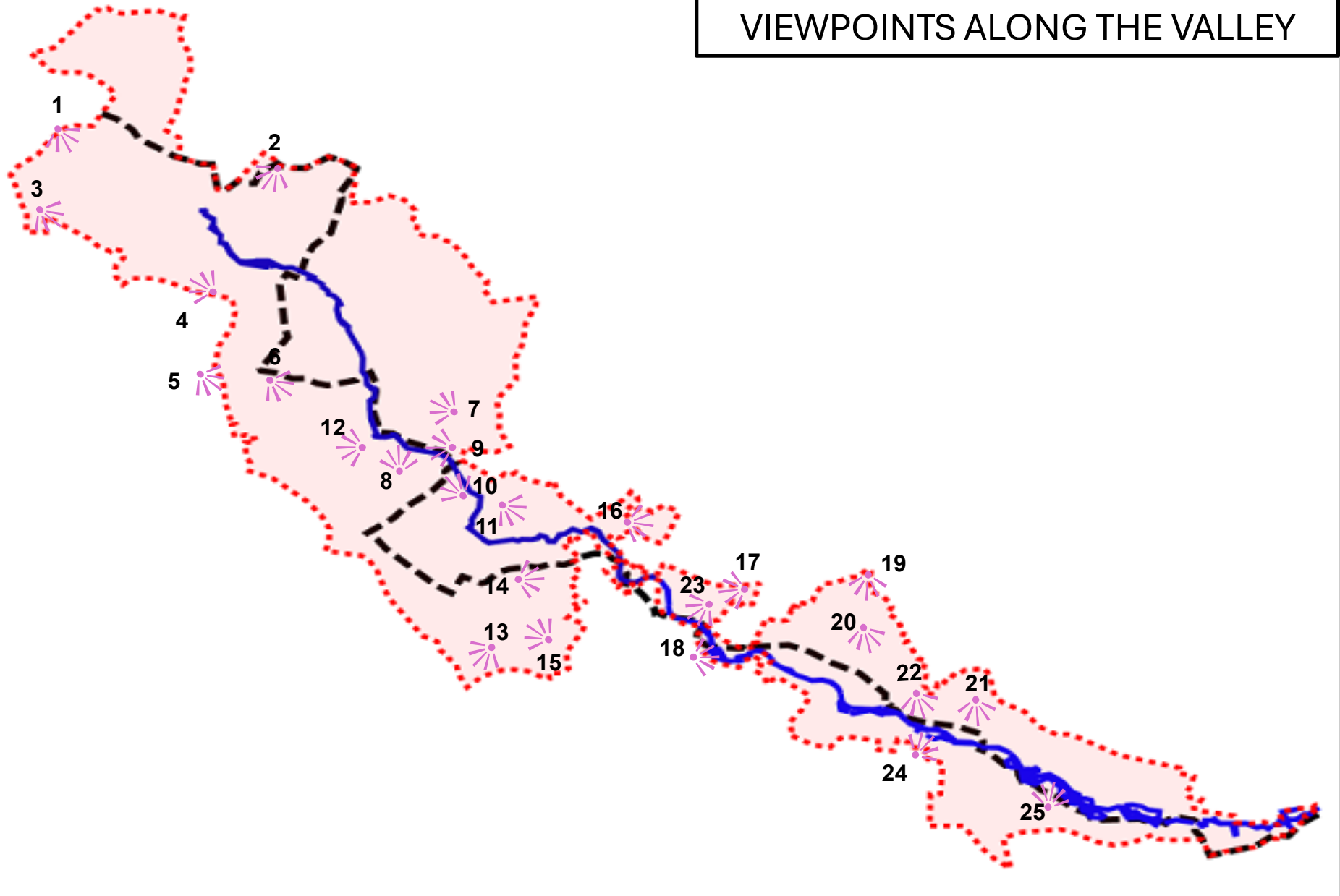
15		Homerswood Lane	TL223147	NE	Ayot StPpeter church
16		Danesbury Park, near the Fernery	TL170234	Local/mid-distance view E	Towards Oaklands, looking out across rolling parkland, demonstrating the “green gap” between Welwyn village and Oaklands A popular leisure spot enjoyed by many for walking and dog-walking.
17		NW edge Lockleys Wood near Digswell	TL248161	W	Towards Sherrardswood School and Welwyn village, demonstrating the openness of the space between Digswell and Welwyn village.

18		Digswell Park Road, c200m from the viaduct	TL244151	E	Popular and spectacular view of the W face of the Grade II* listed viaduct as a backdrop to the Viaduct Fields (Digswell Meadows South) and Digswell Park Road pedestrian/cycle route.
19		Orchard Road, Tewin	TL265158	S	Towards river and Welwyn Garden City
20		Tewin Water (Dawley Wood)	TL264154	SSE	Across valley towards Tewinbury SSSI

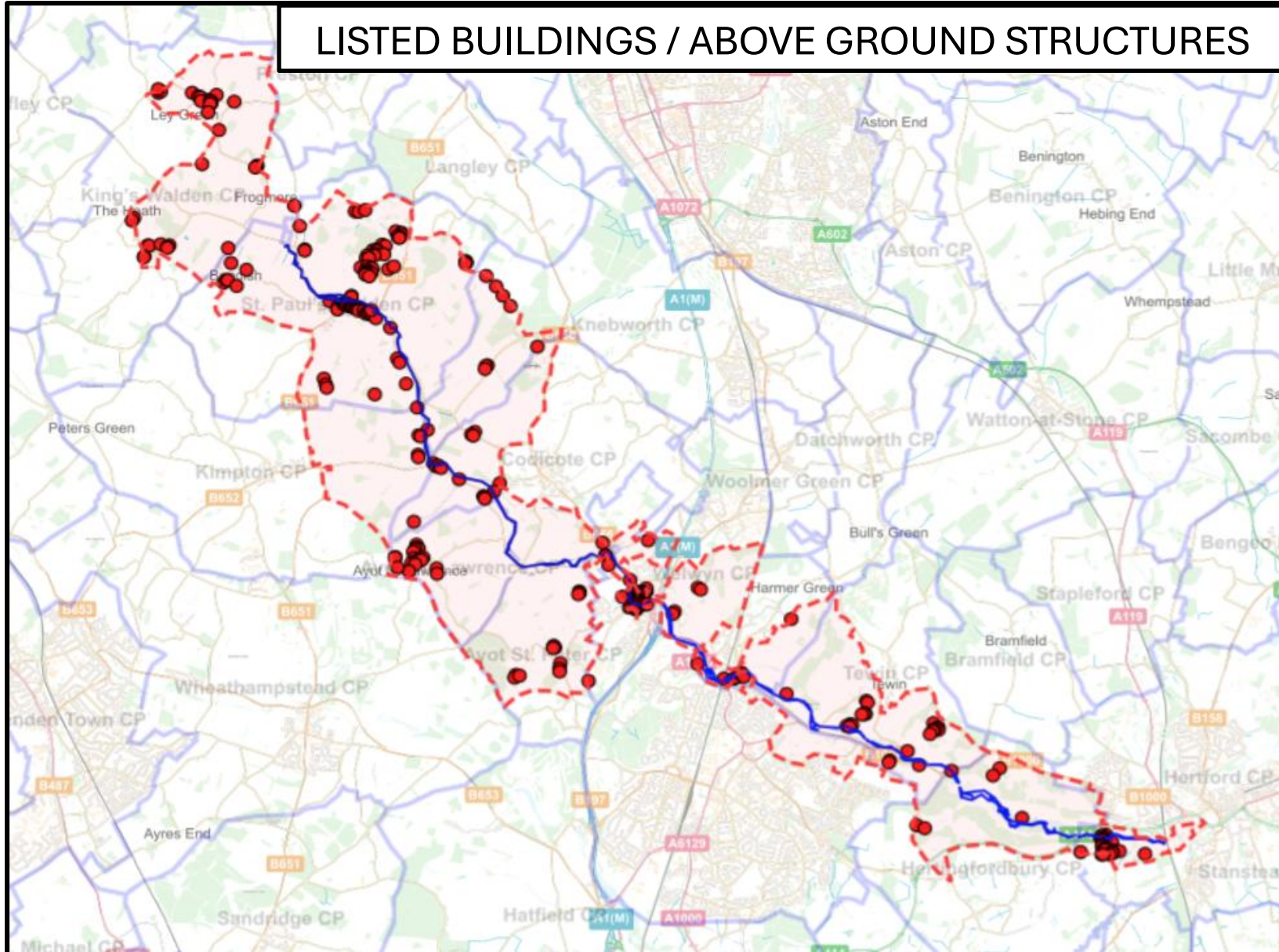
21		Marden Hill, Tewin	TL283138	S	Beyond paddocks and across valley and Archer's Green towards WGC
22		Tewin Churchyard	TL268142	SE	Across farmland towards river and Welwyn Garden City
23		Tewin Water Park: Path on rising ground behind the houses on the E side of New Road		SW	The near-distance shows the S end of New Road and the edge of Digswell Water hamlet. The backdrop is E face of the viaduct and a distant view of the NW edge of WGC.

24		Panshanger Golf Course, near car park	TL2091174	NE	Across valley and Tewinbury SSSI towards Tewin village
25		Panshanger Park Hertingfordbury near B1000	TL294124	Local view	Panshanger Park and Lakes One of the lakes as designed by Repton. Multiple views across the lakes from the footpath

VIEWPOINTS ALONG THE VALLEY






LISTED BUILDINGS / ABOVE GROUND STRUCTURES








For full details on all of the sites on this map, please consult the Herts Historic Environment Record Viewer or Historic England.





VISUAL ASSETS ACROSS THE MIMRAM VALLEY





These are mainly built structures or village scenes [most of which are listed heritage assets], together with some Local Nature Reserves. **The Mimram Valley Trail** is a future project at the concept stage, to offer a walking route along the length of the Mimram Valley, connecting and signing a number of existing footpaths.



ASSET	LOCATION	NOTES & NEARBY FEATURES
<p>The Plough at Ley Green</p> 	<p>Plough Lane, Ley Green, SG4 8LA</p>	<p>Community-owned pub since 2024; possibly the best pub garden in Hertfordshire. https://www.theploughkingswalden.com/</p> <p>Villages of Kings Walden and Breachwood Green and the hamlet of Bendish nearby. Conservation Areas: 1 Grade I and 16 Grade II above-ground designated heritage assets.</p>
<p>Breachwood Green Windmill</p> 	<p>51°53'44"N 0°20'01"W</p>	<p>Early C19 five-storey tower mill: 24 feet outside diameter at the base with brickwork 2 feet thick; 42 feet high to curb level. Red brick with iron and wood remains of mill fittings. A tall circular tapering brick tower. Ogee cap removed leaving remains of curb, frame and portion of fantail structure. Tower remains as a shell. Plain openings with flat arches. Grade II designated heritage asset</p> <p>Private residence since 1998</p>
<p>Stagenhoe</p> 	<p>Stagenhoe Park, St Paul's Walden, SG4 8BZ</p>	<p>House and gardens. Once the family seat of the Earl of Caithness. Grade II designated heritage asset. The current house was built in the 18th century, after a fire in about 1737. It has many 19th-century and later additions, including extensions to the rear and a porch on the west side. The main feature is the stuccoed south facade.</p> <p>Now a private Neurological Centre operated by Brainkind (https://brainkind.org/services/stagenhoe-park/)</p>

ASSET	LOCATION	NOTES & NEARBY FEATURES
St Paul's Walden Bury 	St Paul's Walden Bury, SG4 8BP	Family seat of the Bowes-Lyon family; Grade I heritage asset gardens; Grade II* building; see: https://www.stpaulswaldenbury.co.uk/ St Paul's Walden village Conservation Area; with 20+ above ground designated heritage assets
Whitwell High Street 	Whitwell, Hertfordshire	Whitwell village: 30+ above ground designated heritage assets https://whitwell-pc.gov.uk/the-history-of-whitwell/ Bendish village Conservation Area (5 above-ground designated heritage assets). A classic village high street scene with the river running parallel and behind the line of buildings. The view helps narrate the story of village life over several centuries.
Danesbury Fernery 	Danesbury Park (Local Nature Reserve)	Restored Victorian Fernery with Pulhamite rocks, bridge, dropping well; in its heyday regarded as the best fernery in the home counties; https://danesburyfernery.org.uk/ Set in remnant of historic parkland (a LNR) from Danesbury House; has a number of large mature trees that are of huge value to wildlife, especially bats, owls, fungi and insects. https://www.welhat.gov.uk/directory-record/20275/danesbury-nature-reserve House is a Grade II designated heritage asset and now a series of private residences.
Singlers Marsh Local Nature Reserve & Local Wildlife Site 	Fulling Mill Lane/Codicote Road, Welwyn	Section of regionally important chalk river and lowland flood meadow, adjacent to the River Mimram on the northern edge of Welwyn village. Managed by cattle grazing and cutting, it represents a rare habitat in Hertfordshire. The mosaic of grassland, willow scrub and more mature trees attract a wide range of wildlife especially plants of wet meadows, insects and birds including summer visitors. https://www.welhat.gov.uk/directory-record/20271/singlers-marsh-nature-reserve

ASSET	LOCATION	LOCATION	NOTES & NEARBY FEATURES
Welwyn village centre 	High Street (and Church Street) Welwyn, AL6 9LX		Most of the houses in both streets are Grade II heritage assets, including the church, its walls and railings. War memorial; Guessens (Grade II*-listed house opposite church (which unusually is in the centre of the village); overall, some 60+ Grade II above-ground designated heritage assets plus a further 25+ non-designated). Many pubs and restaurants. A classic village scene including the adjacent ancient ford and road bridge, appreciated by generations of villagers. The view helps narrate the story of village life over several centuries. https://welwyn-pc.gov.uk/welwyn-heritage-trail/
Welwyn Roman Baths 	Welwyn By Pass Rd, AL6 9FG		Discovered in 1960; excavated bath house with furnace, frigidarium, tepidarium, caldarium and hypocaust; associated with the Dickett Mead villa complex; WHBC Museum Service; in vault under A1(M). One of the best-preserved in Europe https://www.millgreenmuseum.co.uk/roman-baths/ Welwyn village nearby
Ayot St Lawrence Old Church 	51°50'15"N 0°16'2"W		Grade II* designated heritage asset; partially demolished in 1775 and dates to 12thC. Ayot St Lawrence village with 2 Grade II* designated above ground heritage assets including Shaw's Corner (NT) and 17 Grade II including the Brockett Arms pub/restaurant. https://hertfordshirechurches.uk/2013/01/12/ayot-st-lawrence-Old-church/
Ayot St Lawrence Palladian Church 	TL1917116895		Grade 1 designated heritage asset. Commissioned by <u>Sir Lionel Lyde</u> , to replace the 'Old Church' which he had partly demolished because it obstructed the view from his mansion; architect was <u>Nicholas Revett</u> , <u>Palladian</u> -style, the front of the church with its <u>portico</u> and screens of columns is designed to be viewed from Ayot House, across a parkland setting. https://www.nationalchurchestrust.org/church/palladian-church-ayot-st-lawrence

ASSET	LOCATION	LOCATION	NOTES & NEARBY FEATURES
Ayot Greenway 		Nearest post code (Ayot Green) AL6 9BE	3 mile long old trackway of the Luton & Dunstable Railway (to Welwyn Garden City; closed 1960s); now a walk/cycle/bridle way from Welwyn Garden City to Wheathampstead. National cycle route. Various web sites for walks, including: https://walkiees.co.uk/dog-walks/hertfordshire/ayot-greenway
Ayot St Peter Church 		Ayot St Peter, AL6 9BG	Arts & Crafts Grade II listed church designed by JP Seddon and opened in 1875; 3 earlier churches (1282; 1751; 1862) old churchyard still remains and can be visited. 6 further Grade II designated heritage assets in hamlet with some 20 further in countryside around and in the adjoining hamlet of Ayot Green. https://www.ayotstpeter.com/st-peters-church/
Digswell Viaduct and Lake 		AL8 7RE OS grid ref: TL249155	Victorian railway viaduct spanning the Mimram valley for the Great Northern railway (East Coast mainline); designed by <u>William Cubitt</u> and opened in 1850; some 40 brick arches, reaching 100 feet (30 m); built of local brick. Grade II* heritage asset. https://www.nationaltransporttrust.org.uk/heritage-sites/heritage-detail/welwyn-viaduct 7 ha Digswell Lake private nature reserve. https://www.digswell-lake.org.uk/
Digswell Water 		Straddling Hertford Road with River Mimram to west and north.	Hamlet adjoining the “new” Digswell village centred on Welwyn North station. 7 Grade II designated heritage assets in hamlet with a further 5 along Harmer Green Lane and the station and tunnel entrance (both Grade II) and 5 non-designated https://www.welhat.gov.uk/downloads/file/617/digswell-character-appraisal&ved=2ahUKEwi50dj7o6KTAxV8VUEAHTTsOhYQFnoECEcQAQ&usq=AOvVaw27D05_g3ulFt1mUiJQNDy7

ASSET	LOCATION	LOCATION	NOTES & NEARBY FEATURES
Tewin Water House		AL6 0AA with access road near junction of Harmer Green Lane and Hertford Road	A late C18 landscape and pleasure grounds to designs by Humphry Repton, surrounding a late C18 country house – Grade II designated heritage asset, set in a c 77ha park, the east boundary being marked by Churchfield Road which is carried over the River Mimram by a C19 bridge. A bridge in similar style carries the B1000 across the river at the north-west tip of the park at Digswell Water. The south-west half of the site largely occupies the flood plain of the valley, whilst the north-east half of the park rises up the hillside. House and associated buildings are private residences but the park is open to walkers
Tewinbury SSSI		Access off road to Tewinbury Farm & Hotel, Hertford Road, Welwyn, AL6 0JB	Reserve contains a variety of habitats including tall fen and swamp, alder carr, willow scrub and willow pollards. Lagoon and adjacent channels support : Kingfisher, Little Egret, Water Vole, Cetti's Warblers, Reed Bunting, Reed Warbler, Green Sandpiper, Pied Wagtail, Siskin, Snipe, Water Rail. https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/tewinbury Tewin village nearby, with Grade I Church of St Peter, and 20+ Grade II heritage assets in village, with a further 7 in the area outside. https://www.tewinvillage.co.uk/
Archers Green LNR		Poplars Green (B1000) Tewin SG14 2NQ	8 hectare floodplain grassland along the River Mimram chalk stream containing a mosaic of wet and dry grassland communities, marginal swamp, wet woodland, parkland trees, hedgerows. Water Voles, Brown Trout, Dragonflies, Marsh Marigold, Southern Marsh Orchid, Common Water Crowfoot, Devil's Bit Scabious. https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/archers-green
Panshanger Country Park		Panshanger Park SG14 2NA	Originally owned by the Cowper family from the late 17thC to the mid 20thC; some of its 10,000 acres were purchased to create Welwyn Garden City. Park designed by Humphry Repton; original house demolished but orangery remains; Great Oak; Broadwater lake. 17 species of Dragonfly; Teal and Shoveler duck, Water Voles, 10 species of bat, Reed and Sedge Warblers, Osprey, Buzzard, Red Kite, Kestrel, Hobby. Restored following gravel extraction. https://panshangerpark.tarmac.com/

ASSET		LOCATION	NOTES & NEARBY FEATURES
Hertingfordbury		Off A414, west of Hertford	Village, with the associated hamlets of Birch Green, Cole Green, East End Green, Letty Green , and Staines Green; overall, 39 Grade II & II* designated heritage assets in village and hamlets, https://www.hertingfordbury-pc.gov.uk/history/
Willowmead Local Nature Reserve		End of Becketts cul-de-sac off A414 west out of Hertford, SG14 2AN	2 hectare area of Alder, many of considerable age. Water Voles, common frog, grass snake and birdlife: Kingfishers, Siskins, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Song Thrush, Nuthatch and Treecreeper breed in the woodland; Mallard, Moorhen and Coot along the river. https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/nature-reserves/willowmead

Visual Assets across the Mimram Valley

