The Letchworth we know today is special for a number of reasons. This Garden City is responsible for a series of firsts and its success is all thanks to one man and his book that was published in 1898.

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1898 – How it all began

Howard publishes his book that clearly and concisely describes his vision of a network of Garden Cities. Not only will this bring together the advantages of town life and country life, but will, through careful planning and development, alleviate many of the desperately poor living and working conditions in towns and villages across the country.

1903 – The first Garden City

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WHAT MAKES LETCHWORTH SO SPECIAL?

There are, in reality, not only two alternatives - town life and country life but a third alternative, in which all the advantages of the most energetic active town life, beauty and delight of the country may be secured in perfect combination.

Ebenezer Howard 1898

LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY

A Day in the World’s First Garden City

Explore Letchworth Garden City’s fascinating history

For more information visit:
Local and Tourist Information Centre
33-35 Station Road, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 3BB
Open Monday to Saturday – 9.30am to 4.30pm. Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays.
www.letchworthgc.com
01462 487868

The International Garden Cities Exhibition
296 Norton Way South, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 1SU
www.garden-cities-exhibition.com
01462 476075
Open Saturday 10am to 5pm; Sunday 11am to 4pm
Other times by appointment

Garden City Collection
Study Centre, Wilbury Hills Road, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 4LB
www.gardencitycollection.com
01462 476075

Produced by: heritage foundation Letchworth Garden City
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A LASTING LEGACY

The world's first Garden City remains close to Ebenezer Howard's ideals and is run today exactly as it was intended by that Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, a charitable organisation and direct successor to First Garden City Ltd. All profits made are reinvested directly back into the Garden City.

The International Garden Cities Exhibition is home to displays that explore the history of Ebenezer Howard's revolutionary idea, how it was put into practice here in Letchworth and elsewhere and lets you look at how the legacy has had an influence across the globe.
Planned to combine the best of ‘town and country’ living, Letchworth Garden City offers something quite different, a unique heritage and some interesting places to explore. From the Spirella Building to The Cloisters, you’ll be fascinated by the range of architecture, from Arts and Crafts to Art Deco. The Local and Tourist Information Centre is the perfect starting point to begin your exploration of the world’s first Garden City.

1. **Spirella Building**
   - 4 minute walk from the Local and Tourist Information Centre
   - Created for the famous Spirella corset company, the ‘Factory of beauty’ promoted good working conditions and leisure facilities for their “Healthy Happy Workers.” Built in three stages between 1912 and 1920, this magnificent building, now grade II* listed, offers a picturesque stop in the Garden City.

2. **1905 & 1907 Exhibition Cottages**
   - 3 minute walk from the Spirella Building
   - Shortly after the birth of the Garden City, Letchworth was home to two experimental housing exhibitions. These exhibitions played a key part in shaping today’s Garden City. Three bedroom houses were constructed for £150 excluding land costs.

3. **Norton Common**
   - 2 minute walk from Norton Common
   - A beautiful 63-acre Common and park in Norton Road.

4. **The Settlement**
   - 3 minute walk from the Spirella Building
   - In 1925, The Skittles Inn became The Settlement, a centre for adult education and local activities which is still in use today. The factory ceased operation in the early 1980’s and has since been restored to its former glory housing modern offices, space, a café, fitness centre and grand Ballroom which hosts conferences, dances, wedding ceremonies and receptions.

5. **Mrs Elizabeth Howard Memorial Hall**
   - 5 minute walk from The Settlement
   - This building was created for the famous Spirella Black Squirrels, it offers acres of unspoilt grass and woodland, tennis courts, bowling green and a 1935 tido style outdoor pool. Recognised in Keep Britain Tidy’s prestigious Green Flag Award scheme, the benchmark national standard for parks and green spaces in the UK.

6. **The International Garden Cities Exhibition**
   - 3 minute walk from Mrs Elizabeth Howard Memorial Hall
   - Built in 1907, this is one of Letchworth’s most distinguished and unique early buildings; The Meeting House for The Society of Friends (Quakers). Today, Howgills is not only a place of worship but also home to many local activities and organisations.

7. **Howgills Friends’ Meeting House**
   - 8 minute walk from The International Garden Cities Exhibition
   - Built between 1905 and 1907, this is one of Letchworth’s most distinguished and unique early buildings; Howgills Friends’ Meeting House was originally intended to be an open air school for poor children to grow up in healthy country surroundings. Upon completion, philanthropist Annie Lawrence used the school to instruct teachers and carers about the importance of outdoor living, crafts and theosophy. Howgills has remained to this day as a perfect venue in which to hold Weddings, Parties, Meetings and other special occasions.

8. **The Cloisters**
   - 10 minute walk from Howgills Friends’ Meeting House
   - Originally a school for poor children, Lawrence’s school opened in 1907. Lawrence used the school to instruct teachers and carers about the importance of outdoor living. The Cloisters is among the most characteristic and sensitively designed buildings of the Garden City. In 1929, The Skittles Inn became The Settlement, a centre for adult education and local activities which is still in use today.

9. **Sollershott Circus**
   - 10 minute walk from The Cloisters
   - Originally planned to be the grand centre of Letchworth and house its civic buildings, the Town Square failed to come to fruition. Instead, the Circus was built to celebrate the town’s centenary. Benefitting from great views of the Town Hall, the Old Grammar School and Library, with an eye catching fountain, Broadway Gardens is the perfect setting for a summer picnic.

10. **Broadway Gardens**
    - 5 minute walk from Sollershott Circus
    - Originally planned to be the grand centre of Letchworth and house its civic buildings, the Town Square failed to come to fruition. The Broadway Gardens has a short history since opened in 1994, with an eye catching fountain, Broadway Gardens is the perfect setting for a summer picnic.

11. **Town Hall**
    - 1 minute walk from Broadway Gardens
    - This architecturally beautiful Town Hall was designed by Bennett and Bidwell in 1935 using a typical Georgian style. Overlooking the magnificent Broadway Gardens, the Town Hall was originally built as council offices for the District Council. It now houses council offices for North Hertfordshire District Council.

12. **Broadway Cinema**
    - 1 minute walk from the Town Hall
    - This Art Deco picture house was the third to be built in Letchworth, opening in 1936. Designed by architects Bennett and Bidwell and built by Howard Hurst. In recent years, the cinema has undergone extensive refurbishment programmes which included restoring and developing the cinema into a four screen facility. The cinema has remained popular throughout its existence and is one of the few remaining independent cinemas in Hertfordshire.
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