

SITE NAME: Address	Winnington Hall Winnington Lane, Northwich, CW8 4DU				
Unitary Authority:	Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council, formerly Vale Royal Borough Council				
Parish:	Northwich				
Location:	1 mile northwest of Northwich town centre, East of Winnington Lane (A533)				
Grid Ref:	SJ 64505 74749				
Owners:	Anderson Bevan Limited, Tata Chemicals Europe and many smaller businesses and homeowners				
Recorder	MJ	Date of Site Visit	Sep. 2019 - Jul. 2020	Date of Report	07.09.2020

Summary

Winnington Hall lies in the River Weaver valley in an area that has been an industrial site since at least the post medieval period. The Hall, with a wing by Samuel Wyatt, was once set within extensive parkland. It is now almost completely surrounded by disused, derelict and functioning industrial buildings mostly associated with the chemical industry, and housing dating from the early nineteenth century built to accommodate the workforce. The only remaining portions of the Park are Winnington Park Recreation Club, a short length of the driveway and areas of lawn partly bounded by trees to the south and west of the Hall.

Principal remaining features

Winnington Hall - Listed Grade 1 (List Entry Number 1310245)

Statue of Sir John Brunner - Listed Grade 2 (List Entry Number 1161131)

Statue of Ludwig Mond - Listed Grade 2 (List Entry Number 1139114)

Brunner Mond and ICI Alkali Division War Memorial - Listed Grade 2 (List Entry Number (1432698)

Rose Cottage - Listed Grade 2 (List Entry Number 1261149)

6 and 7 Dyar Terrace - Locally Listed Buildings

Winnington Park Recreation Club Pavilion - Locally Listed Building

Recreation Ground

Sandstone horse **mounting block**

Lawns

Ornamental trees and shrubs

Natural regeneration of Woodland

History (Letters in brackets refer to maps, numbers refer to images in related maps and images documents)

The site of Winnington Hall lies in the meandering River Weaver valley below the steep slopes up to Barnton and Anderton. Winnington Bridge and Winnington Swing Bridge

cross the River Weaver and the Weaver Navigation on the A533. There may have been a ford crossing the river, possibly to the west of this point.

Early in the 7th century the Anglo-Saxon Wina family settled in the Weaver Valley. The name Winnington is derived from 'Wina', 'inga' - his family and 'tun' - a group of buildings enclosed by a fence. Ormerod¹ gave details of the succession of families who held the manor of Winnington. However, he writes of a 'supposed ancestor' and the accuracy of some further information has been challenged by more recent writers.²

During the first half of the 11th century the manor was divided into two equal moieties. between Ranulf de Mesnilwarin (Mainwaring) and Osbern FitzTezzo of Normandy.³ The manor would have consisted of two single-storey, timber-framed and thatched butt and ben houses. The Domesday Book of 1086 records that they had moieties of 60 acres. William de Boidele (Boydell), a descendant of Osbern FitzTezzo, granted a moiety of the manor to Liddulph de Twemlowe.

The moieties were united in 1190, when Liddulph's son, Robert de Castello, married Margery, a descendant of Mainwaring, and took the name de Wynnington. There were salt pits at Winnington as early as the late 14th century.⁴ The de Wynnington family owned the manor until it passed into the hands of the Warburtons of Warburton and Arley after the marriage of Elizabeth Winnington to Sir Peter Warburton in 1515.⁵ The Warburtons built a timber-framed house of three bays in the late 16th or early 17th century (1).

In 1693 Thomas Warburton (1676-1743) found rock salt, which proved profitable for the Winnington estate. He extended the house with two more bays and added a brick service wing to the north of the house in the early 18th century. The Weaver Navigation was constructed between 1720-32. By 1742 the Winnington estate was heavily in debt and the manor house was dilapidated, although the salt business was still thriving. The 1777 Burdett Map of Cheshire shows several salt mines at Winnington (A). The Navigation deviated from the natural course of the river in places, leaving a storm-course through the Winnington estate, shown on the Greenwood map of 1819 (B) and the Bryant map of 1831 (C).

In 1743 Hugh Warburton married wealthy widow Susannah Williams and restored Winnington Hall, adding two more black and white bays, and a brick service wing, kitchen and stables to the north of the house. Later he built a tower on the north-east corner of the building, all of which left him with financial difficulties again.⁶ In 1765 Anne Susanna Warburton inherited the Winnington estate and married Richard Pennant, whose family had been Liverpool merchants involved in the slave trade.

Between 1773 and 1775 Richard Pennant, who was later to become the 1st Baron Penrhyn of Penrhyn Castle, built what became the larger stone wing (4) to the northwest of Winnington's timber-framed construction. Robinson⁷ attributes the new wing to James Wyatt on stylistic grounds, but Historic England lists it as a Samuel Wyatt house. The new Wyatt Wing is asymmetrical and it has been suggested that it was part of a larger plan. What that plan may have been is far from clear.⁸ It may have been the intention to have a matching wing in place of the old house, but whatever the plan was, it was never completed.⁹ Pevsner¹⁰ considered that the junction between the two wings, where there was a large Venetian window, was "unsatisfactory". He thought that the Orangery in the room behind was a strange thing to have as part of a house.

Around 1780, what is now known as the Grade 2 Listed Building, Rose Cottage (45), was probably included as part of the Winnington Estate improvements.¹¹ Pennant also built an elaborate semi-circular henhouse about 140 feet wide for six hundred hens (17). This was considered to be the finest in England and according to Robinson it was almost certainly designed by Samuel Wyatt as he was working at Winnington in 1785. The magnificent poultry house had a long facade with a tall centrepiece and square end pavilions. Between the pavilions there were a series of cast iron columns, one of the earliest structural uses of cast iron. It was faced with thin slates from Penrhyn, closely jointed and painted to resemble ashlar. In the centre of the semi-circle there was a circular pond and a pump, labelled on the 1876 Ordnance Survey map (F, G) as a fountain. There was an adjacent paddock more than 250 yards long for the free-ranging hens.¹²

In the early nineteenth century the timber-framed wing of Winnington Hall was coated with roughcast and castellated, possibly to make it more in keeping with the Wyatt Wing (2, 3, 10).

When Richard Pennant died in 1808, his widow, who was childless, put the Winnington estate up for sale.¹³ Winnington Hall was described as “a complete and elegant residence; great part of it is a modern building of stone, covered with slate, most pleasantly situate upon a dry healthy spot, at an agreeable distance from the River Weaver. The bank sloping from the house is tastefully ornamented by plantations with Cascade and Bridge in View”. There was a dairy, “elegantly fitted up, and lined with slate”. A stable yard was “surrounded by stabling for 50 horses, coach houses, harness rooms, saddle rooms, blacksmith’s shop ... servants’ bedrooms etc.” There was a walled kitchen garden with green house, hot house, grape house, pinery, succession house, flower garden, plantations, shrubbery and pleasure ground”. The floral garden and kitchen garden were each more than 2 acres and the park 42 acres. The manor, outlying farms, woods and plantations, “chiefly ornamental and of luxuriant growth” totalled 640 acres.¹⁴

John Stanley, 1st Baron Stanley of Alderley, who had been living in a house on the Alderley estate for 30 years after Alderley Hall had burnt down, bought the estate from the Pennant family. However, Stanley spent much of his time in London, and the condition of Winnington Hall deteriorated (3, 4). In 1817 the family moved into a new Alderley Hall.

Greenwood's map of 1819 (B) shows the Weaver Navigation forming the north and north-east boundary of the Winnington estate. An island had been formed between the old course, or storm-course, of the river and the canalised section to the north-west of the Hall. The Park extended to the southwest divided by the road to Barnton with a river crossing to the northwest of the Hall. The exact course of this road differs slightly from the earlier Burdett map. Another road or track to Anderton passed through the Park to cross the old course of the river and the Navigation. A track is shown through an avenue of trees, continuing through the park; this was to become Winnington Avenue. After crossing the road to Barnton, The Avenue became the driveway to the Hall. There are salt works indicated to the north-east and west of the park.

The course of the road to Barnton on Bryant's map of 1831 (C) is further to the east than indicated on Greenwood's map with a right-angle turn after crossing the storm-course and the Navigation. The road to Anderton does not pass through the Park, but it forms a junction on the right-angle bend. This road layout is similar to that on the

Burdett map (A). The island is clearly marked, but the storm-course of the river is shown as more significant than that of the Navigation. A track is shown to divert from The Avenue to Moss Farm.

Baron Stanley's son, Edward, moved into Winnington Hall in 1842, although he also lived mainly in London, leaving his wife Henrietta Maria Dillon alone at Winnington. She wrote in a letter that she did not find "the grass or the trees at all as black as I expected".¹⁵ They returned to Alderley Hall in 1850 after Edward succeeded to the barony.

The Tithe Map (1836-51) shows the extent of the Park within the estate (D, E). The size of the Park was reduced, so that it no longer included land to the west of the road to Barnton, now Winnington Lane or the A533. The roads and tracks follow similar courses to those on Bryant's map. The hall is shown with the walled kitchen garden to the north, which is also visible on the later photograph of 1894 (22). The semi-circular building to the west is the poultry house adjacent to a large paddock (17). The plot on Winnington Lane to the northwest of the driveway, is the site of the Grade 2 Listed Rose Cottage (44). It contains two cottages probably built as part of Pennant's Winnington Estate improvements.¹⁶

The owners of Winnington Hall had been allocating part of the estate to the salt industry from the late 18th century. Land above the salt mines yielded excellent rents and the factories were providing jobs and wealth for local people. However, this unattractive industrial development with its air pollution meant that those, who could afford to live elsewhere, did. The Stanley family were rarely resident at Winnington Hall; instead they rented it and the parkland to tenants.

An Anderton farmer rented some of the land and, in 1851, Miss Margaret Alexis Bell rented the Hall and gardens as a school. As principal of an "academy for young ladies", Miss Bell employed two teachers, who had been trained to teach in accordance with her progressive ideas, and four assistants. Ten or twelve servants looked after as many as thirty-five girls, mostly aged between fifteen and twenty. She was inclined to embark on grand projects without finance and seek funding later. Her pioneering activities for girls included athletics and cricket; there were school outings, exhibitions and lectures; musicians, including Sir Charles Hallé, visited to give recitals.

From 1859 until 1868, art critic, John Ruskin was involved in Miss Bell's progressive school and helped the school financially. A frequent visitor, he had permanent use of rooms in the Hall and was recorded as "Visitor, Artist & Art Critic, Political Economist M.A." on the 1861 England Census. He approved of the mixture of sports, handicrafts, music and dancing. He instructed the girls on the Bible, geology and art; he supervised their music, donated pictures and geological specimens and watched them play cricket in the grounds.¹⁷ A series of photographs (5 to 16), dated 1866, were probably commissioned by Ruskin and illustrate outdoor activities. The photographs show that the grassed areas around the hall, where the girls played various sports, were flat and well managed, with a gardener mowing the grass (15).

None of Ruskin's involvement with the school was recorded in his autobiography and the details only came to light in 1952, when his correspondence with Miss Bell and the girls (his "dearest birds") was found in a house in Brighton. "The Winnington Letters" were published in 1969. In one of the letters, Ruskin described Winnington Hall standing "in a superb park full of old trees and sloping down to the river, with a steep bank of

trees on the other side ..." (11, 12). The school closed around 1872, when Miss Bell was heavily in debt.¹⁸

In 1870-72 Winnington was described in John Marius Wilson's Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales as a township of 91 houses in the parish of Great Budworth with a population of 460 and several salt-works. It was at this time that Henry Stanley, 3rd Baron Stanley of Alderley, who was short of money, offered the mansion, estate, valuable brine pits and salt works for sale, a total of 675 acres. The Hall and gardens were still occupied by Miss Bell's academy. The Hall was described as a "very complete and elegant mansion, stone-built and site dry and healthy". It stood on a bank sloping towards the River Weaver with a cascade and elegant bridge in the distance (11). There were stables, coach houses, blacksmith's shop, keepers' rooms, granary and gardens. The poultry houses also had lodges attached to them. Lord Stanley received no bids for the Winnington estate.¹⁹

Meanwhile, chemist Ludwig Mond (1839 - 1909) was working on the production of soda. In 1872 he got in touch with the Belgian industrialist Ernest Solvay, who was developing the Solvay process. The next year he went into partnership with the industrialist John Brunner (1842 - 1919) to work on bringing the process to commercial viability. Together they began searching for land to build an alkali factory. The partners went on long country walks around Northwich looking for a suitable site at the centre of the salt industry. They needed a source of brine, which could be pumped straight into the works. Limestone supplies were nearby in Derbyshire, while railway links to Liverpool and the Midlands provided easy access for supplies of ammonia.²⁰

In March 1873, having been thwarted by Lord Delamere from buying land near his Vale Royal estate, they found what they were looking for, the Winnington estate belonging to Lord Stanley. This was situated on the River Weaver Navigation near the Trent & Mersey Canal, which could facilitate the transport of raw materials and finished goods to and from the works. There was an immediate source of brine on the estate, which also included a railway siding. Brunner and Mond wanted to buy a small plot in the bend of the river. Lord Stanley insisted that they take the lot, including the Hall and the woodland, or nothing.

Mond had initially wanted to demolish the Hall; Brunner also thought that they could make money by demolishing the old hall and selling valuable fittings and the lead from the roof. Trees in the park could be felled for timber. However, Brunner was unable to find accommodation locally for his large family and persuaded Mond that, if repairs were done to the house, they could both live comfortably in it. Whilst the industrial plant was being built and commissioned, Mond needed to be available on site and had been sleeping in the factory so that he could monitor the machines throughout the night.²¹ From the windows of the Wyatt Wing of Winnington Hall he would be able to see the Cheshire salt pans smoking, so Mond decided to move in. Brunner settled for the dilapidated Tudor Wing.²² He had the roughcast facing removed and replaced much of the original timber-framing (18). The attic floor was abandoned.

By May 1873 Mond had established an office in the Angel Hotel in Northwich. On 12th May he sent his first letter on notepaper headed Brunner, Mond & Co., Manufacturers of Carbonate of Soda (Pure Soda Ash), Winnington Park, Northwich. Their first office was in the old harness room at Winnington. Later a cowshed was converted to a clerks' office and the loft above to a drawing office. Production was delayed by trouble with suppliers and difficulties with the manufacturing process, which had not yet been

perfected.²³ There was also local hostility to yet another works damaging the surrounding farmland. Brunner and Mond were in full production, however, by mid-1874.²⁴

The 1876 Ordnance Survey map (F, G) shows that the Brunner Alkali Works had been established very close to the east end of the hall, but just outside the Park. There were two salt works, brine cisterns, a brick works and a railway track to the east of the hall. The factory had its own railway line, which was connected to the West Cheshire Railway (Anderton Branch). These features indicate that it was already a well-established industrial site. There was pedestrian access from Winnington Lane close to Winnington Bridge leading to the north of the hall and garden. This path also led to Brunner's Alkali Works and the adjacent brine cisterns.

In 1876 the Parkland was mostly to the south and west of the hall. The walled kitchen garden, visible on the map, can also be seen on the later photograph of 1894 (22). A water tank, glasshouses and a terrace overlook the river to the north-east. A weir and sluice below the terrace indicate control of the water level on the River Weaver Navigation. The weir would also have been an attractive feature to view from the terrace. The poultry house with its central fountain and paddock were surrounded by trees, but by this time it may no longer have accommodated hens, as Mond had converted the poultry house into a cottage for one of his senior managers. There were tracks through the trees and above the river, with more trees throughout the park. There were seven ponds, pools or pits in the park; one had a sluice indicating that the water level there was managed. At the southern end of the largest pool there was an icehouse and to the west a dovecot. The lodges (20) are marked at the entrance to the driveway, shown as a slightly more sinuous feature than on earlier maps. Close to the more southerly lodge there was a pinfold.

By 1879 Brunner Mond had begun to build houses for the managers on Dyar Terrace, named after the American scientist, (27) and for workers on Solvay Road, named after the Solvay Process (28, 29). Numbers 6 and 7 Dyar Terrace are Locally Listed Buildings.²⁵ Brunner Mond & Co were generous employers believing that, "A smaller number of well-paid men will do the work better than a larger group of lads at lower salaries".²⁶ The firm also pioneered the manufacturers' responsibility for the well-being of their employees.²⁷ There was a Works Sick Committee that appointed a doctor for sick workers. Not only did workers receive free medical care but they also had a nurse to look after workers, who received sick pay.²⁸

Brunner and Mond became a limited company in 1881. As soon as Ludwig Mond became more affluent, he hankered after the learning and culture of London and moved to St. John's Wood. The Wyatt Wing, his side of Winnington Hall, was kept open and used on his frequent visits. Sir John and Lady Brunner also went to live in London, leaving his eldest son, to look after the Tudor Wing of the Hall (18, 19) until his tragic death in 1890. The Brunner family left the Hall for good in 1891 and the Mond family finally gave up their interest in the Wyatt Wing during the First World War. After Brunner and Mond had moved out of the Tudor Wing, it was just used for board meetings. By 1897 it had become Winnington Hall Club (19) for the use of the less than 20 managerial staff. About 80 staff and foremen are pictured (23) outside the main door to the Wyatt Wing. There is an ornate cast iron porch surrounding the door (26).

In 1886 Brunner Mond & Co. built a school (32) for the children of their employees living in the new village of Winnington Park. Evening classes were held at the school and,

from 1890, these were compulsory for employees aged fourteen to eighteen, and also for apprentices to the age of twenty-one.²⁹ As early as 1889 Brunner addressed a mass-meeting of the workers urging them to join a trade union.³⁰ In 1890 Winnington Park Recreation Club was established for the benefit of the workers at Brunner Mond. The timber-framed Pavilion was built on the Recreation Ground in 1898 (24) with major additions in 1923 and 1937.³¹ The timber frame meant that it could be jacked up in the event of subsidence due to salt extraction.³² Land was also donated to establish the beginning of the Moss Farm Sports Complex and for the thirteenth-century style³³ St. Luke's Church (34).

Around the turn of the nineteenth/twentieth century an office building, Mond House, was constructed close to the northeast corner of the Hall (M). By 1908 the area of the Parkland had reduced by about half, as industrial buildings and housing encroached mainly from the east, as shown on the Ordnance Survey Map of that date (H). The works had been extended considerably. There were new buildings close to the Hall. Photographs (19, 22, 25) show that these extensions included the caustic chimney, which would have dominated the landscape. Another photograph (21) indicates newly planted trees along the main roadway to the Wyatt Wing; the caustic chimney is just visible beyond. The Tudor Wing appears unchanged. Housing for workers on Solvay Road (28, 29), a school (32), St. Luke's Church (34) and a post office occupied outer parts of the former parkland. The former poultry house (17) and Winnington Lodges (20) were still in existence, although the poultry house is believed to have been demolished during the early 1900s. The Recreation, Football Grounds and Grandstand were all within the Park. The Pavilion (46), now a Locally Listed Building, was constructed in 1898. Extensive wharves and warehouses on the Weaver Navigation (37) were linked to the factories by a system of railways. Purpose built coasters, or Weaver Flats, worked on the Navigation and the River Mersey, linking Winnington with the trading port of Liverpool.

Land in Winnington was 'given' to the people of Winnington in 1908. This land was later called Jubilee Fields following Brunner Mond's Jubilee celebrations in 1948/9 (35). Winnington Avenue Youth Football Club have played on Jubilee Field since their founding in the 1920s. Around 1912, fifty corrugated iron and timber four-roomed bungalows (30) were built to accommodate families. The Bachelor Hall (31) was also built to house 200 single workers. This area on Winnington Avenue was known locally as 'tin town'.³⁴ The Bachelor Hall was donated to Sandiway Golf Course in 1921 as a clubhouse and the bungalows had all been demolished by the early 1950s.

In 1885 John Brunner was elected the Member of Parliament for Northwich. He founded a number of schools in the Northwich area and re-endowed Sir John Deane's Grammar School. He paid for the establishment of a free library and then funded a replacement building in 1909, when subsidence left the original damaged beyond repair. By 1899 he had been created a baronet. Ludwig Mond was a benefactor to a number of scientific organisations. Life-size bronze statues of Brunner and Mond, now Grade 2 Listed, were positioned on granite plinths in front of the Research Laboratory (M) (33). Edouard Lanteri's 1912 statue of Mond, with beard and moustache, depicted him in a greatcoat and a big floppy hat. W. Goscombe John's 1922 statue of a bearded John Brunner showed him in his morning coat. The statues were still in front of the Research Laboratory in 1971³⁵, but they were moved to a position in front of Mond House (M) in 1995.

During World War 1, the Victoria Salt Works run by Brunner Mond and Co Ltd were

producing Ammonium Nitrate and Calcium Nitrate Tetrahydrate for the production of explosives, probably at the Winnington Salt Works, marked on the OS First Edition Map as the Brunner Works.

In 1919 Winnington Hall Club took over both wings of the hall. The conversion included adding rooms to the north-east of the Tudor Wing and kitchens and utility rooms to the north of the Wyatt Wing.³⁶ Around 1920 the two wings of the hall became one and Winnington Hall was restored by Darcy Braddell. He was responsible for much of the internal decoration,³⁷ including the decoration and refurnishing³⁸. He also designed the Grade 2 listed war memorial (60), which stands opposite the Wyatt Wing. It consists of a square and tapered obelisk in Portland stone, capped with a representation of an eternal flame in bronze and glass. The square base has a stone statue of a lion couchant at each corner. It commemorates those employees who fought and died in the two World Wars.

The Wallerscote Island Soda Ash Works was completed in 1926 and Brunner Mond & Co. merged with other chemical companies to form Imperial Chemical Industries, ICI, the following year. An aerial photograph of 1928 (37) shows the new Research Building at the junction of the A533 and Solvay Road and wharves and warehouses on the Weaver Navigation. Solvay Road stands out, suggesting that it had recently been resurfaced and there are no trees along its length. The later photograph (38) shows newly planted trees on the approach to the Wyatt Wing bordering the former Croquet Lawn, where tennis is the game being played, probably by members of the Winnington Hall Club.

The 1938 Ordnance Survey map (I) shows that the A533, Winnington Lane, had been realigned leaving Rose Cottage and other houses on Winnington Old Lane. A road followed the route of the earlier footpath to the north of the hall giving vehicle access to the Hall and the Works (37). The former poultry house and paddock had been replaced with new buildings, including the Research Building (57). Some of the workers' houses at the north end of Solvay Road had made way for extensions to the works and new houses were built to the east of Solvay Road (28, 29). The route of Solvay Road went on through the works, around the back of the Hall to rejoin the A533 by the Research Laboratory, but this is no longer a through route, leaving two separate Solvay Roads. Properties, including Winnington Hall, on the north-western section use Winnington Lane as their address.

The expansion of the works within the Parkland had reduced Winnington Park to little more than a recreation ground. The Lodges are not clearly marked on the 1938 OS map, but they were recorded by Pevsner³⁹ in 1971 and designated as Locally Listed Buildings in 2006. They were probably demolished in the 1970s or early 1980s⁴⁰. There was more development to Winnington Works on the west side of Winnington Lane. Winnington and Wallerscote Works went through further development after the Second World War. The 1940s aerial photograph shows the air pollution that had been affecting the area for decades, or centuries, and the dumping of ash and lime waste created in the chemical process.⁴¹

The 1952 Ordnance Survey map (J) shows that after the Second World War the development of the industrial site included railway lines linking all parts of the works across the site. The development of the railway network accounts for the realignment of Winnington Lane, which bridged the railway and pipelines that linked the factories. On the most recent OS map (K) a cutting is indicated, and embankments are marked on

both sides of the road. More houses on Faraday Road and Solvay Road had been demolished to make way for industrial constructions. A photograph of 1959 (39) shows just how close the expansion of the industrial site had reached to the Hall without any visible boundary between. The ornate cast iron porch and door had been replaced by French windows and a tree or shrub was growing in front of the blocked Venetian windows of the former Orangery (81).

The clearer image of the 1970s aerial view (40) shows the railway network that developed in the 1940s connecting all parts of the site. Winnington Park Recreation Club had started with less than twenty members and by 1977, when it ceased being part of ICI, membership was almost two thousand.⁴²

Winnington Primary School moved from the Solvay Road site to their new building on Moss Farm in 1985 and the old building (32) was demolished.

By the time of the 1980s aerial view (41) ash and lime waste were no longer being dumped on the site. Furey Wood was the first area to be landscaped and made accessible to the public. ICI was split up in 1986, returning the Winnington factory's name to Brunner Mond. Part of Jubilee Fields was developed to establish Weaver Vale Garden Centre, now part of the Klondyke Group. There had been trees planted and natural regeneration at Furey Wood by the 1990s (42). The Winnington Hall property was sold; boundary fencing was probably installed and trees planted as screening around this time. Winnington Hall Limited was set up as an events / functions business in 1995, but the hall was converted to offices in 2007. GLR Offices Ltd. have managed the fifty suites or individual offices for rental since 2011.

In 1996 ICI Chemicals & Polymers Limited agreed on the sale of the 191.37 acres Winnington site to Brunner Mond & Company Limited and to Northwich Resource Management Limited. In 1998 work began to transform the Research Building into a leisure complex. The 1990s aerial photograph shows that demolition of part of the works had begun. (42)

In July 2000 Vale Royal Borough Council (the predecessor authority to Cheshire West and Chester) agreed to proposals from Brunner Mond to redevelop redundant and under-used land at its Wallerscote / Winnington works site into an "Urban Village", comprising a mixture of uses including residential, employment, leisure, a school, local services and open spaces. Construction finally started on the 1,200-home development in mid-2013.

Tata Chemicals bought Brunner Mond and it was re-branded Tata Chemicals Europe in 2011. Two years later the Winnington Works area to the west of Winnington Lane was levelled and construction of Winnington Urban Village began. Wallerscote Soda Ash Works closed in 2014 and was demolished two years later, ending the production of soda-ash. The Winnington Works site (N) was identified by Tata Chemicals Europe as being a possible site for residential development in June 2014 as part of Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part Two). The project proposal included a number of masterplans and suggested a potential 1,200 dwellings could be provided on the site. Within the site boundary lies the Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant, which provides steam and electricity to Tata's operations in Northwich.

After a hundred years, St. Luke's Church was in a poor state of repair, although it had been designated a Locally Listed Building in 2006. The congregation moved to the

former library building close to Winnington Park Recreation Club. The church building was demolished in 2015 and the site has been cleared for housing development.

In June 2019 Tata announced that the Winnington site would have a "£16.7m carbon capture plant by 2021 - a milestone for the evolution of the site and the UK's first plant of this scale". The demolition of the remaining industrial buildings to the east of Winnington Lane began in 2019. The land was identified for redevelopment in Cheshire West and Chester Council's Local Plan Part Two, and in the Northwich Neighbourhood Plan (N). These plans proposed the potential for around 1,200 new homes, increasing the population of Winnington by about 2,800. This would be alongside the creation of public open spaces, leisure and community facilities and commercial activities.

Tata considered that the potential redevelopment would transform the disused areas into an attractive, sustainable area with amenities for the wider Winnington community. The demolition of Winnington Works would include the levelling of the 19th century Mond House and Semi-Tech Building (M). In its planning application to Cheshire West and Chester Council, Tata Chemicals Europe says that the buildings' state of disrepair presents a 'risk to health and safety', and that their demolition would present the opportunity for re-development and employment in the demolition process.⁴³ Local residents' application to Historic England to list Mond House was unsuccessful.⁴⁴ Plans have been submitted to move the Brunner and Mond statues to Northwich town centre⁴⁵ (36) following an appraisal by AOC Archaeology.⁴⁶ Meanwhile Mond House is to be demolished and the statues placed in storage.

Winnington Hall is now almost surrounded by industrial buildings (M). The 2020 Land Registry plan (L) shows that the Winnington Hall property, bounded in red, is owned by Anderson Bevan Limited. In 2001 properties bounded by green lines had transferred to new owners (now Think Print and Winnington Warehousing Limited).

Site Visit

Winnington Estate

Tree-lined Winnington Avenue linked the estate to the Park. Now most of Winnington Avenue is lined with houses, broken only by the football club's Jubilee Field and Winnington Vale Garden Centre on one side of the road and a small trading area on the other side. The site of Tin Town (30) on Winnington Avenue is part of a huge modern housing development (43). Jubilee Fields have been identified for protection in the Northwich Neighbourhood Plan 2017 - 2030 as they are of special value to the local community. Rose Cottage (44), probably built as a home for one of the Winnington estate staff, sits on a small plot on Winnington Old Lane at an entrance to part of the new residential estate development.

The houses built on Dyar Terrace (47) and Park Road (48) for Brunner and Mond managers are now in private ownership as are the workers' houses on Solvay Road (49). Cheshire Historic Environment Record designates Numbers 6 and 7 Dyar Terrace as Locally Listed Buildings. In the Northwich Neighbourhood Plan 2017 the properties are recorded as "locally historic buildings that are not Listed Buildings but are of some local interest".

Park Entrance

Two calcium chloride storage tanks on the site of the two former lodges (20) were demolished in April 2020. The original driveway leading to Winnington Hall is now the

main entrance to the Tata Chemicals Winnington site (45). Winnington Park Recreation Club with its pavilion (46), bowling green and cricket ground is situated at the south-eastern edge of the entrance. More than half the area of grass that remains from the Parkland, shown on the OS map of 1876, is in Winnington Park Recreation Club.

Access to Winnington Hall

The old entrance to the works by the former Research Building (57) on Solvay Road is a private road. This approach to the Hall is unimpressive as the Wyatt Wing (58) comes into view. Mond House lies beyond the Wyatt Wing and the works security barrier (59). Just before the barrier, opposite the Wyatt Wing, is the War Memorial (60) that commemorates those Brunner and Mond, or ICI, employees who died during the two world wars. There is no longer a view across the River Weaver, its weir and the Weaver Navigation (L). The view of the sluice and weir from the Wyatt Wing is interrupted by industrial structures (50).

There is also no longer a view of Winnington Bridge from the Hall due to the natural regeneration of trees on the banks of the storm-course of the River Weaver (51). The A533 crosses the Weaver and a disused railway set in a deep cutting (52). The railway became a road that has also since been abandoned with the bridge blocked off. Abandoned buildings and pipework are a feature of much of the area (53). Iron railings extend along Solvay Road near the former Research Laboratory and along the A533 as far as the storm-course of the River Weaver. A gate (54) on the A533 would have allowed access into the area. Natural regeneration of trees, mostly sycamore, *Acer pseudoplatanus*, with some ash, *Fraxinus excelsior*, and elm, *Ulmus procera*, and dense undergrowth make the area inaccessible (55). There is a line of eight Lombardy poplars (*Populus nigra*) (56) growing behind iron railings parallel to the former railway line.

Croquet Lawn

The former Croquet Lawn (L) remains as an open, almost circular, grassy area less than 100 metres in diameter. It is bounded by trees where it meets Solvay Road. Most of the trees seem to be natural regeneration, but two trees, a mature beech, *Fagus sylvatica*, and a dawn redwood, *Metasequoia glyptostroboides*, (65) are of interest. The view of the Hall from close to the beech tree looks back across the Croquet Lawn (66). Looking south-east across the Lawn (67), in addition to native trees, there are ornamental trees, a variegated holly and a Lawson cypress, *Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*. There are also shrubs including cotoneaster, escallonia, *Rhus typhina*, buddleia, berberis and *Cotinus coggygria*. From the French windows (64) of the Wyatt Wing the view across the former Croquet Lawn (68) also includes small businesses and the former Research Building beyond.

Wyatt Wing

The eighteenth-century service wing of kitchen, stables and coach house (61) extend beyond the east end of the Wyatt Wing. The entrance to the former Orangery in the Wyatt Wing of Winnington Hall is situated at the south-west corner of the building. Shrubs have been planted in front of the blocked Venetian windows (69, 80). The Wyatt Wing (59) is connected to the Tudor Wing by a brick extension (63).

Tudor Wing

Small shrubs have been planted close to the Hall where the brick extension connects the Wyatt Wing to the Tudor Wing (69) and around the lean-to glasshouse on the other

end of the Tudor Wing. Lombardy poplars (75) have been used to screen off a section of the chemical works, which is close to the kitchen extension on the Tudor Wing (76). Another extension built to service the former Staff Club is now occupied by small businesses (77). The face of a clock overlooks the courtyard, coach house and stables (78) with the gable end of the Tudor Wing (79) visible at the far end.

Driveway and Turning Circle

Industrial buildings now cover almost all of the original driveway to the Hall. There is a raised area, possibly consisting of material moved when land was levelled for industrial use. This area (70), now used by a vehicle maintenance business and as a staff car park for the Hall, lies on what would have been the approach to the Hall. The chemical works comes close to the Hall at this point (71), but fencing has enclosed the works, separating it from the Hall.

On the right-hand side of the original approach to the Tudor Wing there is a sandstone horse mounting block (39, 72, 73). There is a small grassed area in front of the Tudor Wing partly bounded by native trees, horse chestnut and sycamore. There is a mysterious low ridge just inside the perimeter of the lawn and a stone path leading into the dense shrubbery beneath the trees (73). This lawn would have formed part of the turning circle (L). The neglected wooden bench (74) on the edge of lawn is gradually disappearing into the shrubbery. The modern tarmac road follows the original line of the driveway to the Hall for just a very short distance, giving a view of the Hall (81) from the horse mounting block much as it would have looked two hundred years ago.

It was not possible to gain access to the site of the chemical works and confirm the location of the Mond and Brunner statues outside Mond House and other details.

Please note that this report contains the research and recording information available to Cheshire Gardens Trust at the time. It does not purport to be the finite sum of knowledge about the site as new information is always being discovered and sites change.

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Endnotes

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¹¹ www.historicengland

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