

HERITAGE STATEMENT

THE CLOISTERS, BARRINGTON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY

Temporary removal of unstable chimney.



LIST DESCRIPTION

The Cloisters is a Grade II* listed building -

BARRINGTON ROAD The Cloisters

(Formerly listed as North Hertfordshire Masonic Lodge (The Cloisters))

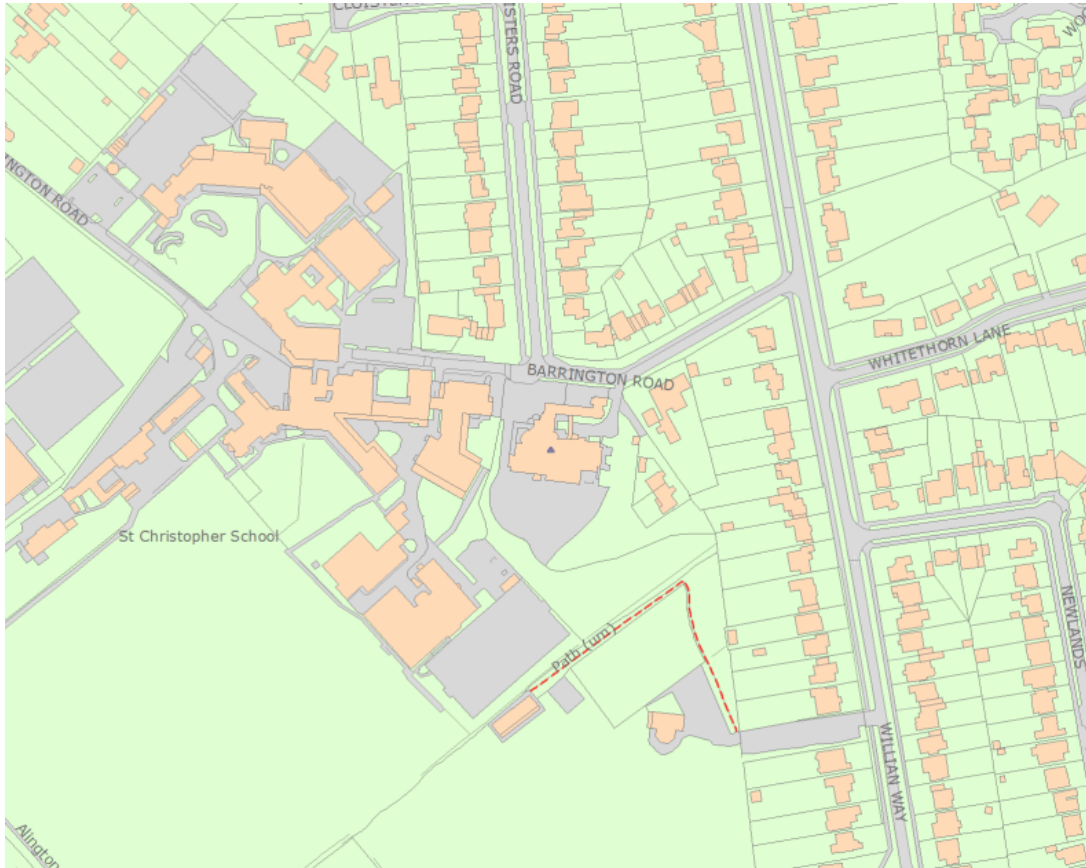
II*

1906-7 by W H Cowlshaw. Built for Miss Annie Lawrence as a residential School of Psychology. Later converted for use as a preparatory school, then a concert hall. By 1948 it had become a masonic lodge. Romantic composition with an octagonal, high tower and two open turrets with spiral staircases rising above the cloister garth, an open semi-circular court, which was later roofed with a rotunda when used as a concert hall. Other features originally included cubicles for dressing purposes linked to an open swimming bath. Tiled roofs. Grey brick with diaper work patterns and Purbeck stone dressings. The rich, symbolic carved work (doves and bats for example) was mostly uncompleted before the building project in its original form came to a halt in 1907.

Interior of painted brick with mass concrete vaulting. Windows of two-light mullioned

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casement with leaded lights, and arranged as enormous mullioned key windows around the central court. Entrance in north-west corner approached by flights of steps leading to arched portico. The cloister garth has an arcade with columns of Swedish green marble and a central fountain in Art Nouveau style around the central support of the tower. Modern additions to the rear



BUILDING AT RISK

The Cloisters is a Category **B** - B - Immediate risk of further rapid deterioration or loss of fabric; solution agreed but not yet implemented

PROPOSALS

22/00248/LBC - Listed Building Consent was granted in April 2022 to –Take down tower chimney to the lower string course (or less if stable) prior to reconstruction.

It is anticipated that the works should start before Christmas but in the unlikely event that the works are further postponed, a new application has been submitted to renew the Consent.

It has been established that the chimney is in a very poor condition and is difficult to access.

SIGNIFICANCE

The chimney is an important focal point to the Tower and its current condition needs to be

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addressed to ensure against loss of further fabric and any impact on the tower and building itself.

It forms an intrinsic part of the overall design ethos of Cowlshaw with the eccentric use of creasing tiles as a decorative and structural corbel course. The photographs below, show the fragmentation of the tiles.

This forms part of a larger strategy of repairs and refurbishment that The Lawrence Cloisters Trust are working towards with Historic England grant support.



Close up photographs showing the current condition of the tile creased corbel