

Statement of Significance

The Biggin, refurbishment
Listed Building consent

February 2026
Hitchin Unite d Charities

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1. Summary

1.1 SUMMARY

The proposals involve much needed conservation work to enhance this important buildings future sustainability, functionality and protect its historic fabric, new alterations are designed to be reversible layers that form part of the historic sequencing of this building which spans over 700 years.

The proposed description of development would be:

“ The removal of 20th-century internal partitions and services, New internal partitions, servicing and the installation of new bathrooms and kitchens and associated internal servicing. Exterior timber framing repairs, window restoration, re-decoration and replacement, and new secondary glazing. The installation of a new air-source heat pump and associated services, new bin and bike storage, courtyard landscaping and new boundary treatment to the north elevation”



1.2 THE BIGGIN BUILDING DESCRIPTION

The Biggin is currently an Almshouse comprising of 11 flats with a remarkable history and sequence of development which has a Grade 2* listing status. As will be described the building has had multiple uses, firstly as a Gilbertine Priory founded in 1360, and following rebuilding it became a school in the 16th Century before its present use which was established in the early 1800s. The building is owned by Hitchin United Charities and has been subject to extensive remodeling in the 1960s, and ad-hoc repairs since. The charity wish to undertake these works as part of a strategy to continue to operate as an Almshouse but also open up the possibility of other future tenure types to generate a sustainable income stream for the building.

The aim of this detailed Listed Building application and Heritage Impact Assessment is to ensure that input from the LPA and Historic England can be integrated proactively during the application process. An exemplary approach to conservation is considered a requirement for new works to be justified to this important building as part of its future heritage. As will be described in the statement of significance the last 7 centuries have seen an evolution of the styles and technologies from each era deployed at The Biggin all of which define its special character. The proposals aim to support a sustainable future for the property in terms of a modern living environment internally for future occupants and landscaping works to establish an improved relationship to the river and Hitchin Market.

This application aims to present an understanding of the significance of the building and the impacts of the proposed alterations. This first section provides an overview of the building and the site, as well as The Biggin's overall history and development. Section 2 establishes the list of works in detail, and provides an Architectural Heritage Impact Assessment to assess the scope of the proposed work.



1.2.1 THE BIGGIN SUMMARY CONDITION

Refer to the attached detailed condition survey. The building is currently in a very variable state of condition internally and externally and it is important that works are carried out relatively quickly to arrest ongoing decay to the building but also accommodate new users. In summary the Building could be described as a future bulding at risk.

As with many Listed buildings the property has been challenging to operate due to the need for large investment, poor energy efficiency and a number of elements that fall below modern standards.

Internally a number of factors over the last century have led to the deterioration of the property these include:

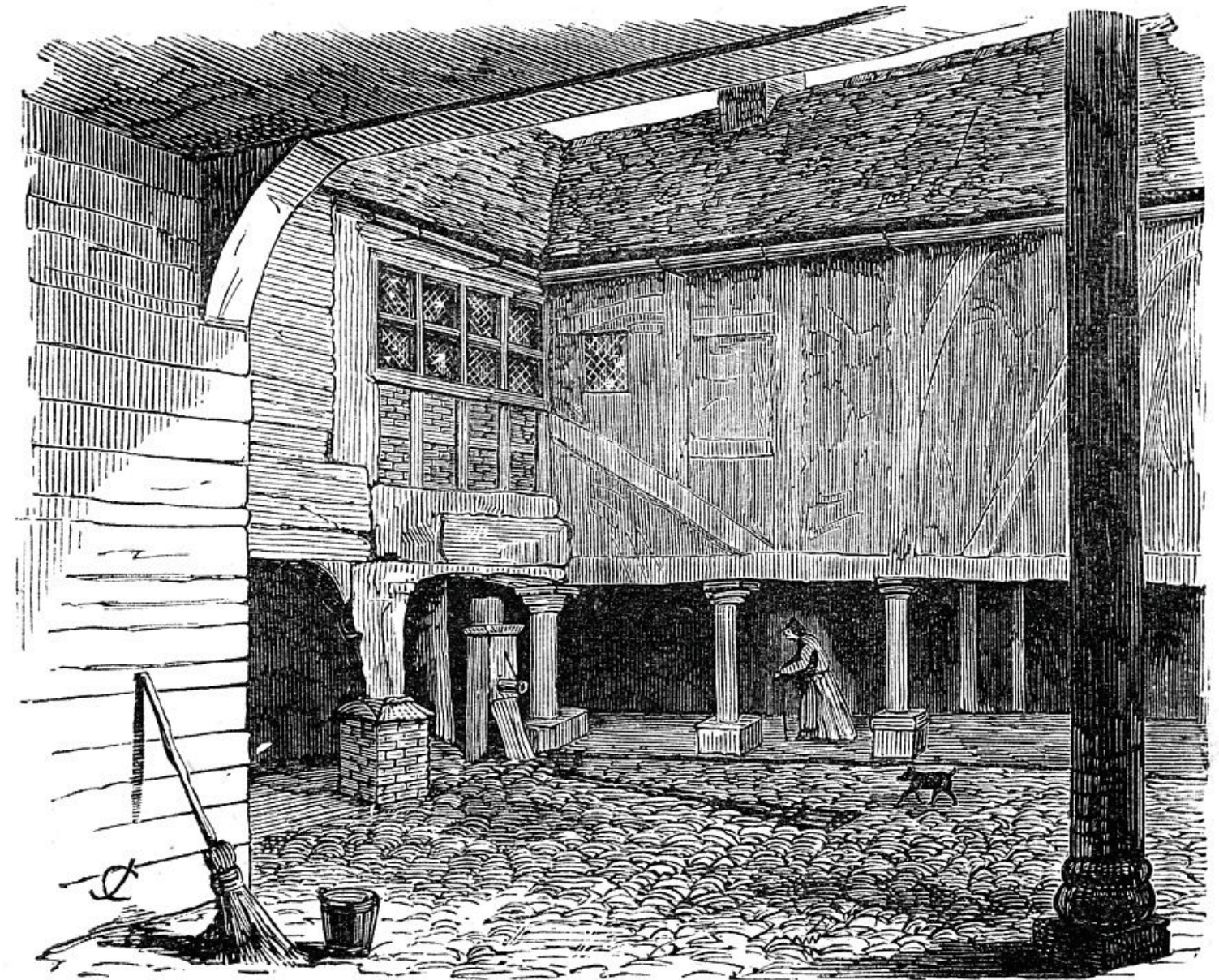
- Blocking up chimneys impervious draught sealing and new secondary glazing.
- New non breathable gloss paint internally aling with tiling and other laminates.
- The installation of new showers, and kitchen equipment without adequate extraction and in some cases no extraction.
- Poor internal services
- Internal clothes drying and other poor storage practices.

These elements have all caused excessive levels of moisture build-up, condensation and damage to the internal fabric

Externally.

Externally, the condition of the roof and each elevation is variable and composed of red bricks from the 17th and 18th Century and timber framing with rendered panels. The elevations and chimney stacks provide some evidence of the development of the house.

- The use of non-breathable paints to the facade, cement mortar, cement and fire foam around timber details.
- The poor installation of wires and other external services
- Poor use of flashings and deteriorating rainwater goods.
- Cement has been incorporated as an infill at the base of the wall which has caused areas of rot and moisture entrapment to the wallplate.
- A concrete and brick pathway has been built around the perimeter of the building and has caused the transfer of damp into the base of the building.



INTERIOR OF THE BIGGIN, HITCHIN.

1.3 HISTORIC ENGLAND INFORMATION

. The following description is provided by Historic England as follows:

Biggin Almhouses. (Formerly listed under Bancroft). TL 1828 NE 3/28
TL 1829 SE 4/28

II* 13.4.51.

2. Early C17 almhouses built in four ranges of 2 storeys round a small open courtyard. Partly rebuilt in more modern brickwork; much of the upper storey is plastered. Some old brickwork in tall chimney stacks. Steep tiled roofs with some louvred dormers. In the courtyard, a cloister is formed by a Small Tuscan colonnade along one side. Irregular fenestration windows of varying sizes, with leaded lights and generally with wooden mullions and occasionally transoms.

According to the List, the building is dated as seventeenth-century in date. This was the opinion of the inspector 1951

The building was however resurveyed in 1954 and June 1968 and it was concluded that it was fourteenth-origin as a Gilbertine Priory. However the structure was not big enough to incorporate a church, a chapter house, refectory and dormitory. On the south side, an eighteenth-century building was demolished in 1958

Excavations were undertaken in 1968, and it was determined that the building is in fact much older than the current English Heritage Listing which remains un-amended.



Source:
Historic England: https://mapservices.historicengland.org.uk/PrintWebServiceHLE/StatutoryPrint.svc/456378/HLE_A4L_Grade%7CHLE_A3L_Grade.pdf

4.1 OVERVIEW

The proposals encompass both external and internal alterations, with the aim of enhancing living conditions to meet the demands of 21st-century lifestyles and to preserve the building.

This philosophy identifies the following overarching objectives that form the driver for intervention within the heritage asset:

- 1. To safeguard the building and its significance from future decay by ensuring a viable, permanent arrangement of uses.
- 2. To preserve the character of the building based on the compatibility of uses to the building’s heritage.
- 3. To retain the special character of the building within its setting while upgrading services and finishes.
- 4. To adopt a heritage-led approach to the re-configuration of the building that seeks to enhance and highlight areas of significance.

The formal scope of work comprises:

- The removal of the of internal 1960s partitions , fixtures and services
- New internal stud partitions and acoustic linings
- Internal door overhaul and replacement as illustrated.
- New decorative service zone linings
- New internal ventilation system and ductwork
- New internal electical services layout, including new cylinders and radiators
- New underfloor heating system to the ground floor.
- Fit out of new kitchens, joinery elements and bathrooms
- Plaster repairs, new plastering to new partitions, internal decorations and fire proofing
- Internal timber repairs, panelling and carpentry repairs and restoration, and revealing existing fireplaces.
- New carpetting to the first floor, New LVT floors to the ground
- Replacement windows, window paint stripping, and window repairs as per the schedule.
- New secondary glazing systems as per the schedule.
- External timber repairs.
- Localised areas of cement pointing to removed and made good, removal of felt flashings.
- Localised wattle and daub infill to replace cement infills to timber frame.
- removal of impervious paint breathable exterior redecoration and new rainwater goods
- Removal of cement haunching at the base of the timber frame and the formation of a french drain perimeter
- Fence removal new perimeter railing, gate and wall.,
- New external works including pathways, soft landscaping bin, mail and bike store
- Concrete removal, replacement paving to the internal courtyard area.
- External lighting
- Air source heat pump and new plant room area
- New external entrance doors, repair to the front storm door.
- Insulation and raised walkway to the loft area.

1.5 HISTORY AND LAND USE EVOLUTION

Founded in 1361, The Biggin began as the Priory of New-Biggin, established by Sir Edward de Kendale, Lord of Hitchin Manor. He secured a licence to endow land for a small house of three canons of the Gilbertine Order—the only monastic order founded in England—giving the site particular national significance. The name “Biggin,” is thought to mean “new building.”

In Medieval Hitchin, a market town along the River Hiz, the priory formed part of a prosperous local economy. Hitchin was already an established settlement by Saxon times and, by the 14th century, held notable religious importance. In addition to The Biggin, the town was home to the Carmelite house known as Hitchin Priory, founded in 1317. The establishment of The Biggin shortly after the Black Death of 1349—which may have halved the town’s population—suggests a period of spiritual renewal and recovery.

The priory was modest in scale. Elements of its medieval fabric survive, most notably parts of the Gilbertine church nave, believed to form part of the present south wing. A fire in the early 16th century destroyed much of the eastern section of the complex, and it was never fully rebuilt.

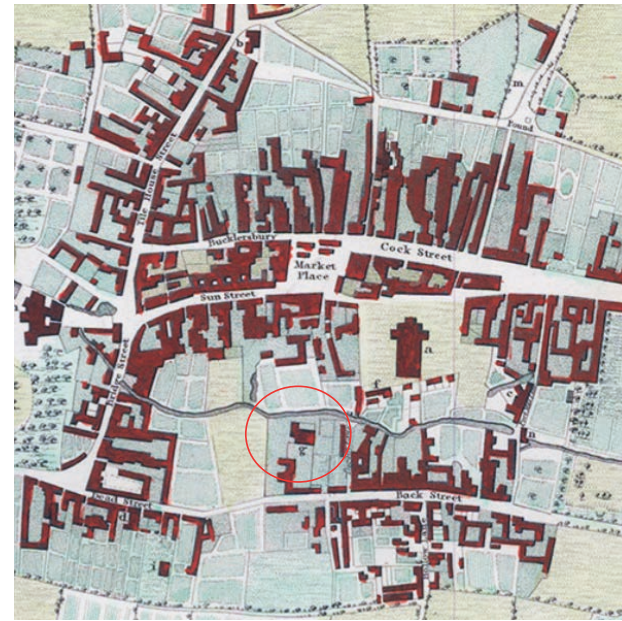
In 1538, during the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII, The Biggin was suppressed along with other religious houses. Though described as small and relatively poor, its closure reflected a profound national upheaval. The property was sold in 1544 and passed into private hands, marking the beginning of its secular life.

By 1585 it belonged to the Croocar family and was soon sold to Robert Snagge, who undertook an extensive rebuilding at the end of the 16th century. Much of the structure visible today dates from this period. Although historical accounts suggest he demolished large portions of the old priory and erected a new house, surviving features—such as a 14th-century window on the south front—indicate that parts of the earlier building were incorporated. The result is combines medieval and post-Reformation elements within a largely 16th-century form. The conversion from monastic complex to private residence is likely to have involved substantial adaptation, especially after earlier fire damage. The need for repairs following the Dissolution suggests a

Source:
<https://north-herts.oc2.uk/document/19/1899#d1900>
<https://www.prestonvillageherts.com/key-organisations/preston-parish-council/>



1700, (Chauncy) - set as a standalone building



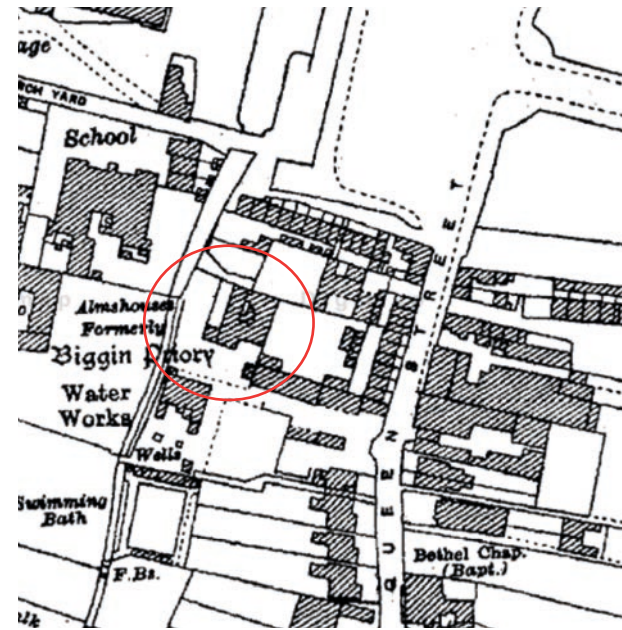
1822 - See the southern extension



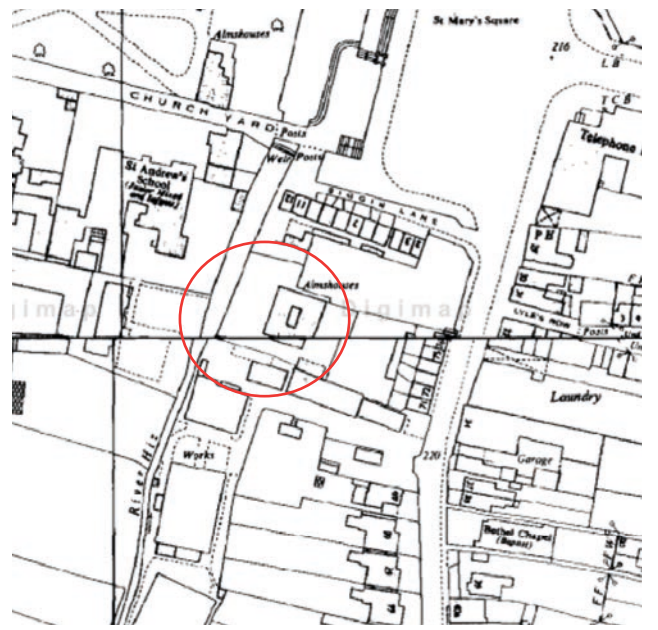
1880 - amalgamation within a group of buildings



1900 - Note the outbuilding adjacent to the river



1930 - The demolition of the slum



1960 - The removal of the southern annex



1970-2005 - The Churchgate and open market space to the north



2026

phase of neglect before renewed private investment.

In the mid-17th century, The Biggin was acquired by Joseph Kempe, who established a boarding school there. Significant internal alterations were likely to have been made to accommodate pupils and staff; painted panelling recorded in the 1920s is thought to date from this period. Kempe's will of 1654 directed that, after his sister's death, the property should become almshouses for ten "poor, ancient or middle-aged women." The school closed in 1723, and the building was formally converted in accordance with his wishes.

Thereafter, The Biggin became home to "Kempe's Old Ladies," providing accommodation and a modest quarterly stipend. Resident numbers later stabilised at twelve, each occupying a bed-sitting room with basic facilities. Additions included a south-west extension built in 1730 (demolished in 1958) and a courtyard pump. For a short period, the building also served as a parish workhouse before reverting fully to its charitable purpose under trustees, now associated with Hitchin Charities.

Architecturally, the present structure is a two-storey, four-range building arranged around a central courtyard, largely reflecting its late 16th- and 17th-century rebuilding. Often regarded as Hitchin's second-oldest building, it retains traces of its ecclesiastical origins beneath later adaptations.

Today, The Biggin remains a functioning almshouse and a listed building, embodying over six centuries of change—from medieval priory to private residence, school, and enduring charitable institution—while standing as a quiet testament to Hitchin's layered history. The building sits in an area of proposed redevelopment at the rear of the Churchgate complex and provides a valuable heritage asset along the riverbank as part of an enhanced town plan.

Sources:

Hitchin Historical Society

Hitchin Museum

Brent Smith Biggin report 2025

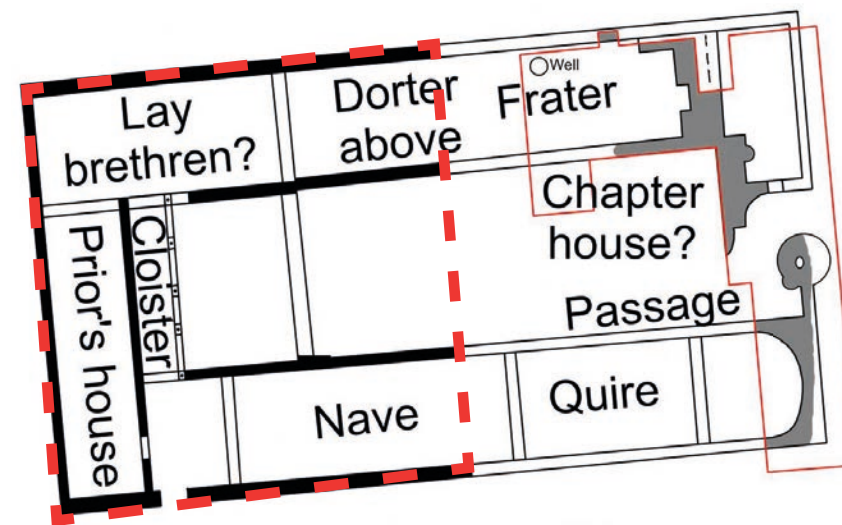
The Biggin, Fitzpatrick Andrews NHDC

Historic England

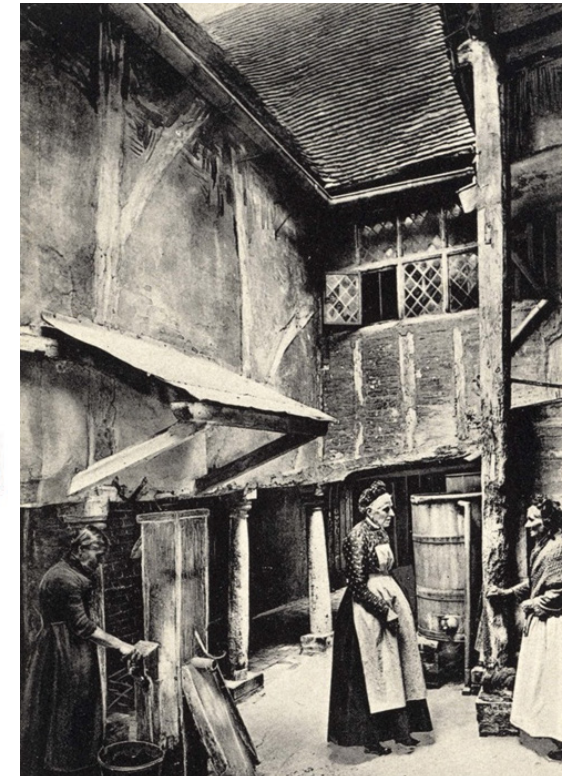
Old Hitchin (Latchmore)

Hitchin Town through Time (Madgin)

HISTORICAL OUTLINE of The Biggin prepared by The Heritage Network Ltd
Heritage Gateway



Above: Current footprint overlaid on the assumed original plan (Hitchin Museum) right: The Biggin Courtyard circa 1900



The Southern Side of The Biggin, note the 17th C addition has now been demolished.

The Building Chronology

Year	Event/Use	Key Figures/Owners	Brief Description
1361	Founded as Gilbertine Priory	Sir Edward de Kendale	Established as a monastic house for three canons.
1402	Indulgence granted	N/A	Alms granted for upkeep on Feast of Annunciation.
Early 16th C.	Fire destroys east end	N/A	East end of church destroyed and never rebuilt.
1538	Dissolution of Monasteries	Henry VIII	Gilbertine house abolished as part of wider policy.
1544	Sold	N/A	Acquired as a private house after dissolution.
1545	Became a house, needed repairs	N/A	First floor inserted into nave, creating a great hall.
1570s-1580s	Home of Croocar family, sold to Snagge	William & Thomas Croocar, Robert Snagge	Croocars owned it, then sold to Robert Snagge.
Late 16th C. (c.1585)	Substantially rebuilt/erected	Robert Snagge	Present building largely constructed, incorporating some 14th-century elements.
1630s-1635	Acquired by Joseph Kempe, became school	Joseph Kempe	Boarding school established, gaining high reputation.
1654	Bequeathed for almshouses	John Kempe (Joseph Kempe)	Will stipulated conversion to almshouses after sister's death.
1723	School closed, sister died, became almshouses	Kempe's sister	Official transition to almshouses, though also used as poorhouse.
1730	Building added to SW corner	N/A	Later demolished in 1958.
1783	Parish considered using as main workhouse	Parish Vestry	Arrangement never materialized.
1812	Poorhouse moved to Bancroft	Hitchin Overseers	Biggin ceased to be a poorhouse.
c.1837	Management by Hitchin Charities	Hitchin Charities	Formalized administration under Charity Acts.
1856	Lead stolen from roof	N/A	Indicated periods of vulnerability.
1951	Listed Grade II*	Historic England	Official heritage designation.
1958	18th-century building demolished	Hitchin UDC	No earlier foundations seen.
1969	Archaeological excavations	Hitchin Museum, North Herts Archaeological Society	Discovery of skeleton ("Charlie the monk") and other features.
Present	Continues as Almshouses	Hitchin United Charities	Provides housing for suitable persons, ongoing maintenance.



West elevation facing Queen Street



East elevation Viewed from the river



Internal Courtyard (east facing)

3. Statement of Heritage Significance

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 Terms of reference

This heritage statement describes the importance of The biggin and its heritage features, providing a compelling rationale for its preservation. Section 3 therefore considers its historical, architectural, artistic, and archaeological values to assesses the potential impact of proposed works, addressing the following:

- Scope: Define the boundaries of the heritage asset and its setting.
- Purpose: State the goal of the statement, which is to understand and protect the heritage asset’s significance.
- Content: Outline the information that needs to be included, such as historical data, architectural features, and impact assessment.
- Methodology: Specify the methods used for assessing the asset’s significance, including site visits, research, and consultation with experts.
- Resources: Identify the necessary resources, such as personnel with expertise in heritage and planning.
- Review: Outline the process for reviewing and updating the statement over time.

This Statement of Heritage Significance highlights potential threats to this significance and aims to highlight and enhance these special qualities so that they can be retained for future generations. The findings of this Statement will provide an objective framework to guide decisions on the future management of the building, from its use, repair and general maintenance.

3.1.3 The Scope of the Statement

The Heritage Statement considers the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve.

3.1.4 Methodology

The following methodology was adopted in preparation of the Statement of Significance

- Understanding the site: In-depth inspection of the building; compilation of photographic record; assessment of current physical condition; including review of previous condition.
- Assessment: Identification and presentation of the significances, vulnerabilities, constraints and gaps in knowledge and understanding of the site; threats to significance.

3.1.5 Legislative and Guidance Context

This appraisal has been conducted in accordance with the general guidelines set out in British Standard 7913:2013 ‘Guide to the Conservation of Historic Buildings’ and also the Historic England publications ‘Informed Conservation’ and ‘Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance,’ 2008 and in particular responds to policies outlined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

In respect of information requirements, it sets out that: “In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.”

Guidance on the implementation and interpretation of historic environment policy has been provided by the following Historic England publications:

- Enabling Development and Heritage Assets Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 4, 2020
- Historic England 2015: GPA2 (Managing Significance in Decision-Taking in the Historic Environment)
- Historic England 2017: GPA3 (The Setting of Heritage Assets)
- Historic England 2019: HEAN12 (Statements of Heritage Significance: Analysing Significance in Heritage Assets)
- ClfA 2014 (Updated 2020): Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk Based Assessment.

Although non-statutory, there are several key international charters which guide best practice in terms of protecting cultural heritage, as follows:

- Venice Charter, 1964, Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites.
- Grenada Charter, 1985, Charter for the Protection of Architectural Heritage of Europe
- Burra Charter, 1988, Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance.

Further guidance:

BS 7913: 2013 Guide to the conservation of historic buildings (adopted Dec 2015)

3.2 UNDERSTANDING OF PLACE

3.2.1 Sources

As parts of the building pre-date collected records, and records can be anecdotal the most reliable means of understanding the history and evolution of The Biggin is to undertake a detailed analysis of the building’s physical structure. The building has been subject toradical changes in its use and modernisation during each successive phase of development. Evidence of the original fabric remains prevalent however the building is a palimpsest and. A study was carried out to identify visible fabric and potential alternation. This was supplemented alongside a number pf detailed studies from various sources and an examination of historic maps, which illustrate the more recent building sequence in the last 200 years.

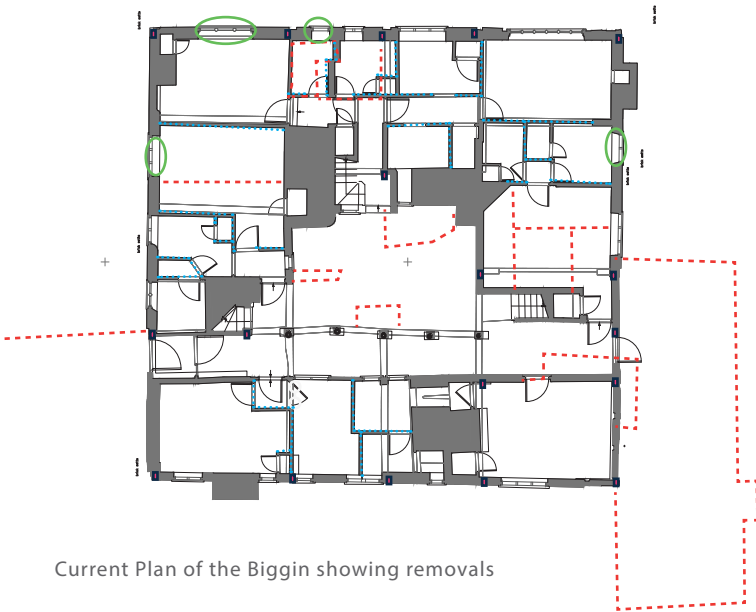
Printed sources are primarily contextual with reference to The Biggin. A local historical society provides a valuable record of both photographs and anecdotal evidence of the evolution of the building.

3.2.2 Topography and Setting

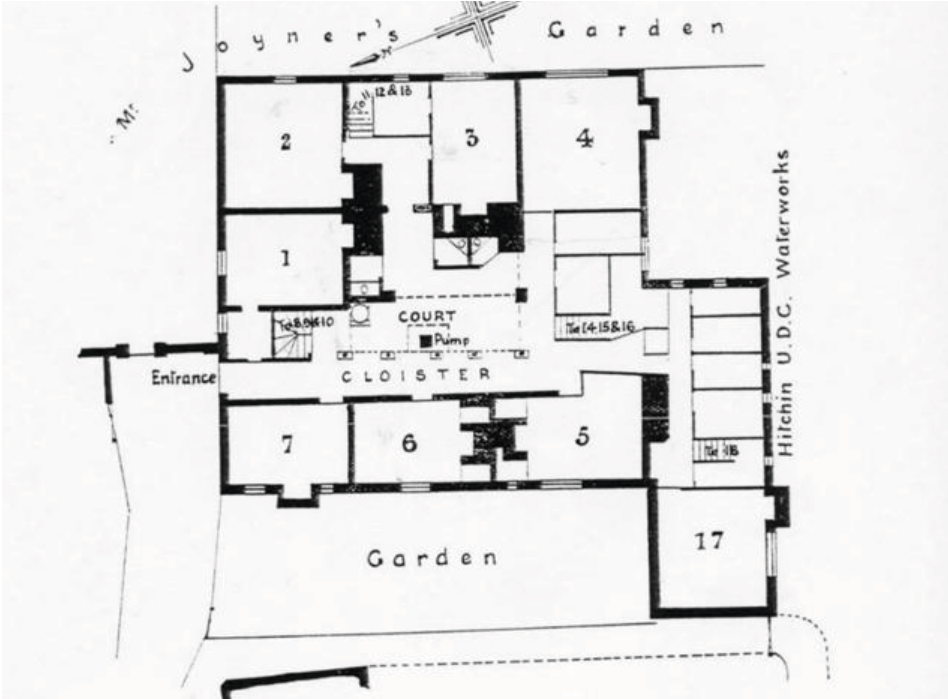
The Biggin is thought to be the first building in this location alongside St Marys Church. It remained in a relatively open setting alongside the River until the late 18th Century as evidenced by the Chauncey illustration of Hitchin (1700) and the Drury Andrews survey map of 1766. The town grew around The Biggin and the dense collection of low income housing around Dead Street clustered around the almshouses, with walls and yards defining the spaces around the building. In the early 20th Century much of this housing was cleared with a small street of houses removed in the 1960s as part of an agreement linked to The Churchgate development that helped pay for the refurbishment of The Biggin.

From the North and West side of the garden, The Biggin Presents itself to the open market space and St Marys Church. To the South and West the building is partially obscured by the housing development at Jill

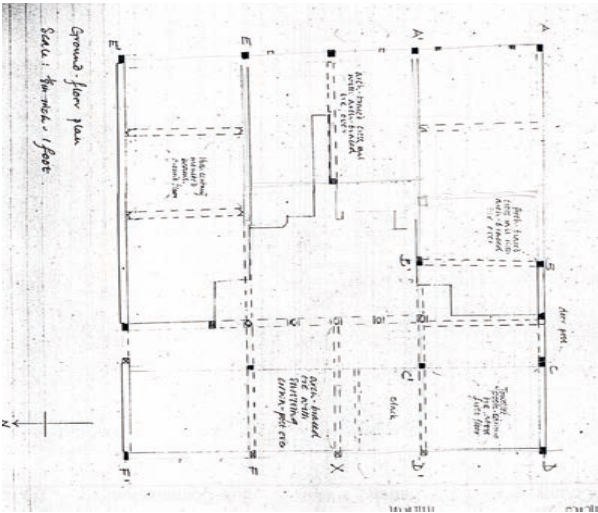
Grey Place (constructed during the end of the 20th Century) and the Seebohm Garden facing onto Queen Street.
The primary building elevations can be viewed from Queen Street and the Market. The buildings contribution to the historic landscape setting of Hitchin is of considerable historical significance.



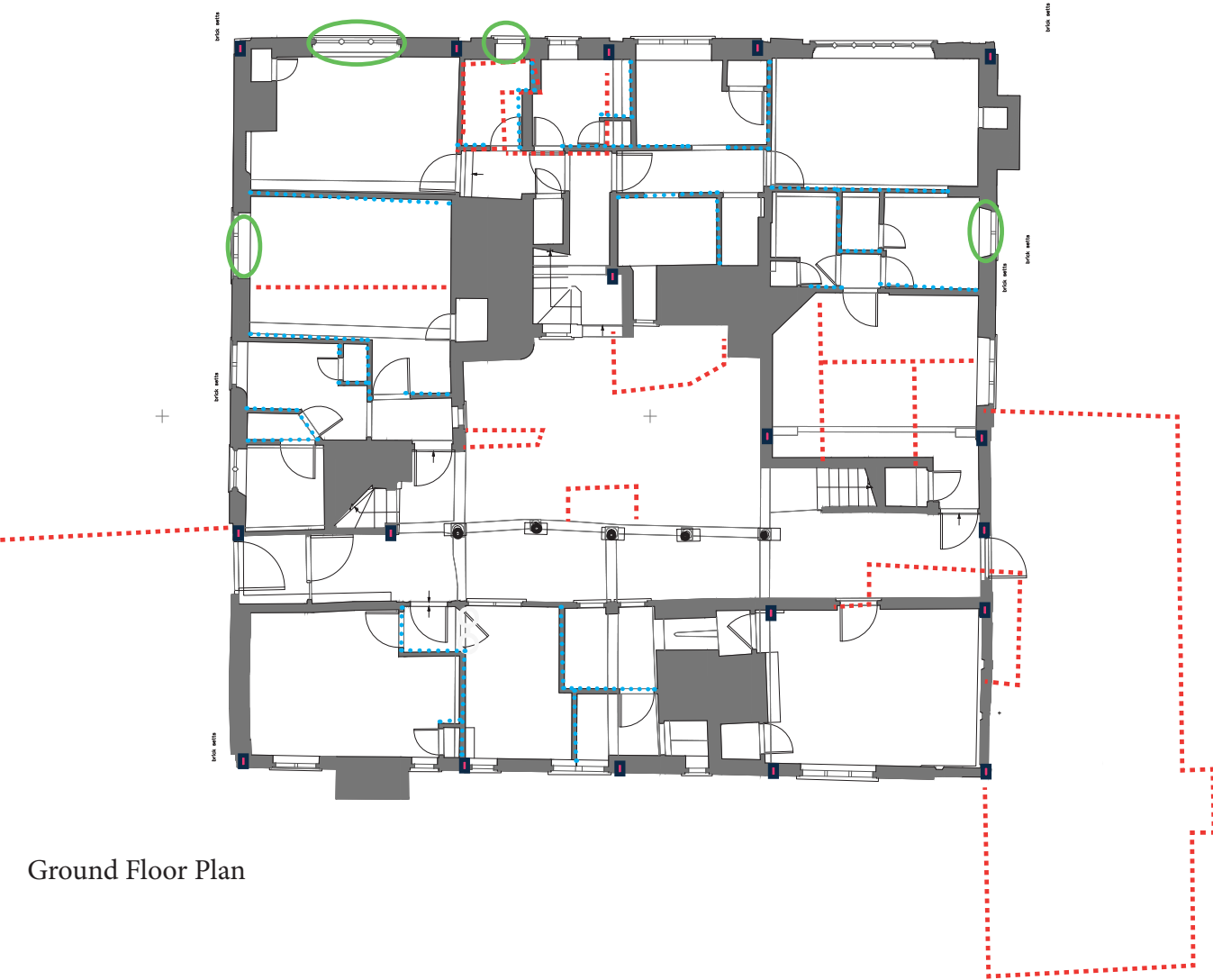
Current Plan of the Biggin showing removals



1901 Plan of The Biggin

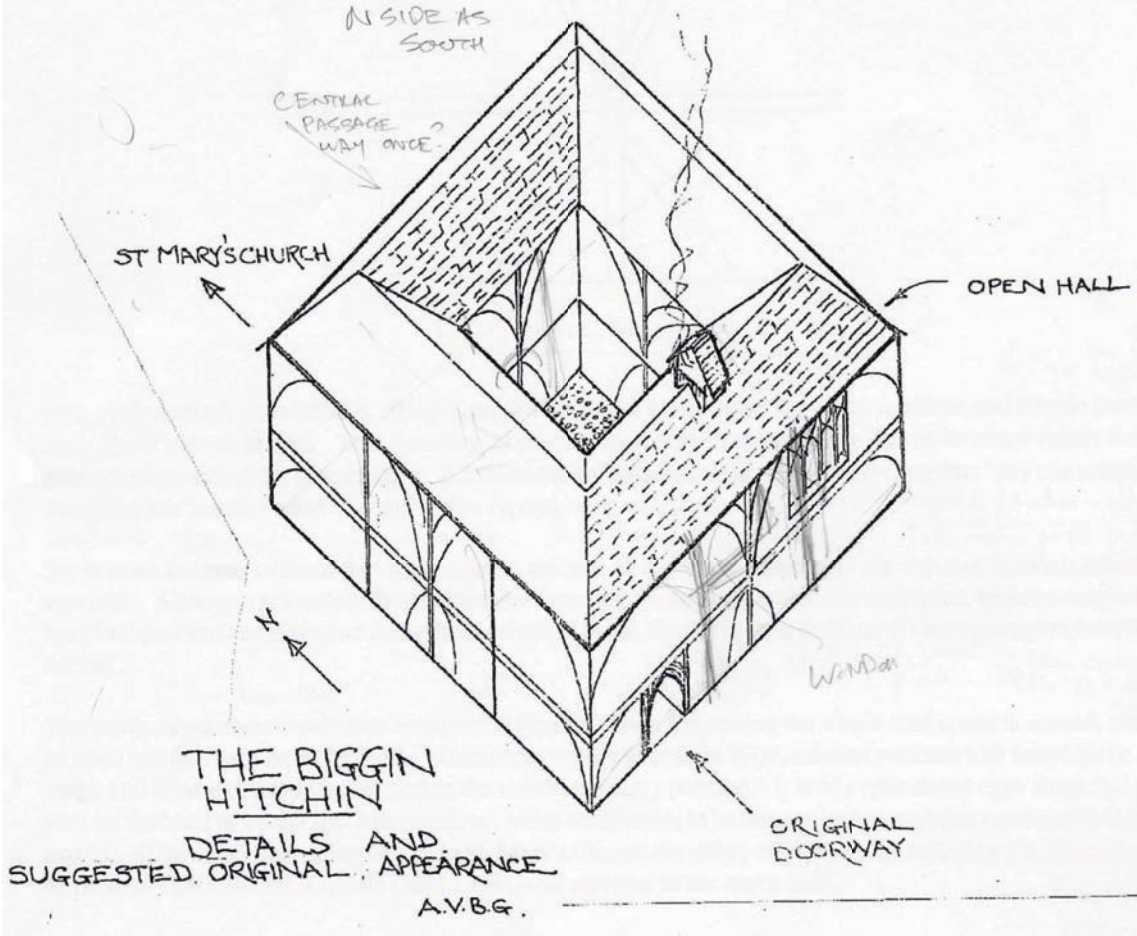


John Smith (1991) analysis of 14th Century Timber elements



Ground Floor Plan

-  New Windows
-  Historic primary timber frame (assumed 14th /15th century)
-  Walls and construction removed post 1908
-  1960s partition
-  Replacement windows post 1908
-  16th-17th Century fabric



Above Diagram by Adrian Gibson, Below; The Biggin (Hertford Museum)



3.2.4 Gaps in Knowledge

Historic photographic evidence is limited and surviving historic architectural and construction drawings could not be sourced. While the detailed on-site survey and careful investigation uncovered much information regarding the original function and appearance of both the external envelope and each of the internal spaces, some information remains unclear without further invasive means of investigation.

Following analysis and investigation the following elements have been identified as being areas of uncertainty:

- 1.) The northern staircase appears to have been inserted after 1901. The date of this alteration is unknown. It has provisionally been dated to the early 19th century.
- 2.) The Southern elevation appears to have been significantly altered, combining historic timber with brickwork. The historic composition of this elevation has been considerably altered, with the timber being filled out with foam and rotten timber sections faced with cement
- 3. Some of the internal partitions appear to be composed of historic timbers but appear after 1901, there is evidence of historic panelling fixed to 1960s blockwork walls. It is acknowledged therefore that some of the historic fabric has been re-appropriated over the years and whilst original to the building may not be in its original position.
- 4. There are areas of the 14th Century timber construction along the Southern former ‘Nave’ which are intermingled with 15th Century timber elements. Without full dendochronology accurate dating of these elements is very difficult.

3.2.5 Threats to heritage

Parts of the property have been unoccupied, due to mould, damp and sub-standard living arrangements. It is essential to implement improvements to the building’s sustainability, in view of the fact that the perceived maintenance burden of such a large property is likely to be a determining factor in the decision-making process. Today, several potential threats to the heritage and significance of the site for a number of reasons.

Deterioration of the Building Fabric

There is a loss of historic details and fabric due to rot and/or misuse. This is a matter that requires attention to remedy the issue or prevent it from worsening.

The building is in poor condition internally, there are instances of inappropriate repair and maintenance work and poor moisture control. There is evidence of failure in the existing flashings and rainwater goods, but also damp ingress around the lower perimeter which is a cause for concern as there is evidence of water ingress and dampness to some areas of the external timbers and masonry.

Securing Appropriate Uses

In light of the potential for hidden services, it is imperative to conduct a thorough investigation into any potential fire hazards. The most effective method of protecting a building’s heritage values is to ensure its continued use. Consequently, the work subject of the LBC is designed to address modifications that will enhance the building’s general use for new owners.

The key to successful building conservation is managing change in a sustainable way to ensure the cultural value of the buildings is passed on to future generations. An open, flexible and forward-looking approach, based on an informed understanding of the site and buildings, is fundamental to good conservation practice.

The Biggin whilst an Almshouse for many years, will aim to preserve this use but these alterations are fundamental also enable the building for other market housing types if necessary.

3.3 APPROACH TO SIGNIFICANCE

A consensus among the various authoritative sources indicates that a statement of heritage significance is predicated on values in terms of the historic, aesthetic, and landscape contribution, which must be safeguarded.

The basis of protection for buildings of cultural heritage significance is understanding their unique identity, expressed as a collection of values that can be enshrined by a place – in other words, what is important, and what aspects of the building contribute to that importance.

The following assessment of significance is laid out in accordance with the documents Historic England Conservation Principles, 2008 and British Standard 7913: Conservation of Historic Buildings, 2013, which acknowledge that understanding both the tangible and intangible significances of a historic building enables effective decision making about its future.

The principles state that sustainable management of a heritage asset must begin with gaining an understanding of its cultural heritage values, and then by setting out its significance, in order to guide appropriate conservation decision making which seeks to sustain those values.

First, Historic England Conservation Principles, 2008, clearly states, “A ‘statement of significance’ of a place should be a summary of the cultural and natural heritage values currently attached to it and how they interrelate, which distills the particular character of the place. It should explain the relative importance of the heritage values of the place (where appropriate, by reference to criteria for statutory designation), how they relate to its physical fabric, the extent of any uncertainty about its values (particularly in relation to potential for hidden or buried elements), and identify any tension between potentially conflicting values. So far as possible, it should be agreed by all who have an interest in the place. The result should guide all decisions about material change to a significant place.”

Further, The ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (1988, also known as The Burra Charter), lays down the principles for assessing cultural significance, defined as “the aesthetic historic, scientific or social values for past, present and future generations.”

Finally, the approach to signification uses the Assessment of Cultural Values BS Standard 7913 framework, that identifies four categories of primary values, paraphrased as follows:

Evidential value

An element of an historic asset that provides evidence about past human activity, including standing structures that are easily visible, as well as those that may be hidden below ground or under water. This aspect of value is strongly related to physical remains, but may also include documentary sources, pictorial records and artefacts.

Historical value

These aspects of significance are often less tangible than physical evidence, including associations with notable people, or historical events or developments. They often connect past people, events and aspects of life with the present, and are likely to have changed with time of shifting perspectives. Historical values are less vulnerable to change than evidential values.

Aesthetic value

This is derived from the way in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from an historic asset, including its appearance and how it lies within its setting. As such, this aspect of value is more subjective than the preceding classifications, being particularly sensitive to change over time and subject to fluctuations depending on many factors.

Communal value

This element of value derives from the meanings an historic asset holds for those who relate to it, or for whom it forms part of a collective experience, or memory. This may include emotional links, and aspects of the site that people can relate to their collective history and heritage. It is important to remember that not all aspects of communal value are positive, and can often relate to uncomfortable experiences and events. Aspects of social value are included in this category. Communal value will change over time.

3.4 SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The building’s significance lies in its layered history which mirrors that of Hitchin,

The Biggin has survived is an exceptional example of architectural resilience, and adaptive reuse over more than six centuries. From its modest medieval monastic layout, revealed through archaeological discoveries to its substantial rebuilding in the late 16th century, which incorporated elements of its earlier form, the building has sucessfully accomodated new purposes. The Biggin is one of the few examples of Hitchin’s medieval heritage and how this adapted to social and economic changes.

The built form and fabric provide evidence of the socio-cultural values of each stage of its development from a Priory, a house, school and laterally a multi-residential almshouse.

The visible layered history of this building manifested on its facadeand internally over six centuries and its relationship to the river setting is key.

The key areas of significance can be summarised as follows:

- The principal elevations, notably the timber framing, evidence of historic openings and evolution of window technology.
- The Chimneys and roofscape are significant, and evidence both the original building form and additions made in by Snagge in the 16th Century to form a dwelling.
- Internally
- The loft area is of exceptional significance, with evidence of the former Nave area and the

The building has suffered in some areas from previous remedial work and unsuitable modernisation, which has had a detrimental effect on its overall condition and the historic fabric. The redevelopment of The Biggin should aim to make the various changes. The Biggin Visible and new additions should sensitively and honestly express this historic legibility

3.5 RELATIVE SIGNIFICANCE

As identified by BS 7913, where changes to the fabric or use of a historic building or its setting are planned, the potential impact of that change on its significance should be identified and quantified.

The impacts from change can either be direct (i.e. affecting the fabric or character of the historic building), or indirect, (i.e. altering spatial qualities or relationships within its setting). Change that protects or reveals the historic building’s significance should be encouraged, whilst change that has the potential to be detrimental to the significance of the historic building should be avoided where possible.

The various spaces or elements within The Biggin have been assessed and graded, based upon the contribution they make to the overall significance of the building. This will assist in the future conservation and management of the building, to protect and enhance the significance

3.6 TABLE OF RELATIVE SIGNIFICANCE

The various spaces or elements within The Biggin have been assessed and graded, based upon the contribution they make to the overall significance of the building. This will provide an objective framework to assist in the future conservation and management of the building, to ensure the special qualities are retained over the various phases of works.

A guide to the grading levels is outlined below and highlighted on the accompanying colour coded floor plan:

Exceptional Significance

A space or element of the building, which is of great importance, and is integral to the overall significance and character of the building. Layout and original fabric are intact, and the space or element is a strong example of a particular period or style.

Considerable Significance

A space or element of the building, which makes an important contribution to the significance and character of the overall building. Layout and original fabric are substantially intact, and the space or element is a good example of a particular period or style.

Moderate Significance

A space or element of the building which contributes to the overall significance of the building but is not a key component.

Low Significance

A space or element which makes little or no contribution to the significance of the building.

The elements or spaces have been subsequently graded according to their sensitivity to change as outlined below:

Very High

Even minimal change or alteration has the potential to negatively impact upon the significance of the building.

High

Some small degree of change or alteration is possible, without having negative impact upon overall significance.

Moderate

A reasonable degree of change is possible.

Low

The space is not of special importance and a considerable degree of change is possible.

3.6 TABLE OF RELATIVE SIGNIFICANCE

The various spaces or elements within The Biggin have been assessed and graded based upon the contribution they make to the overall significance of the building. This will provide an objective framework to assist in the future conservation and management of the building, to ensure the special qualities are retained over the various phases of works.

A guide to the grading levels is outlined below and highlighted on the accompanying colour coded floor plan:

- Exceptional
- Considerable
- Moderate
- Low
- Harmful



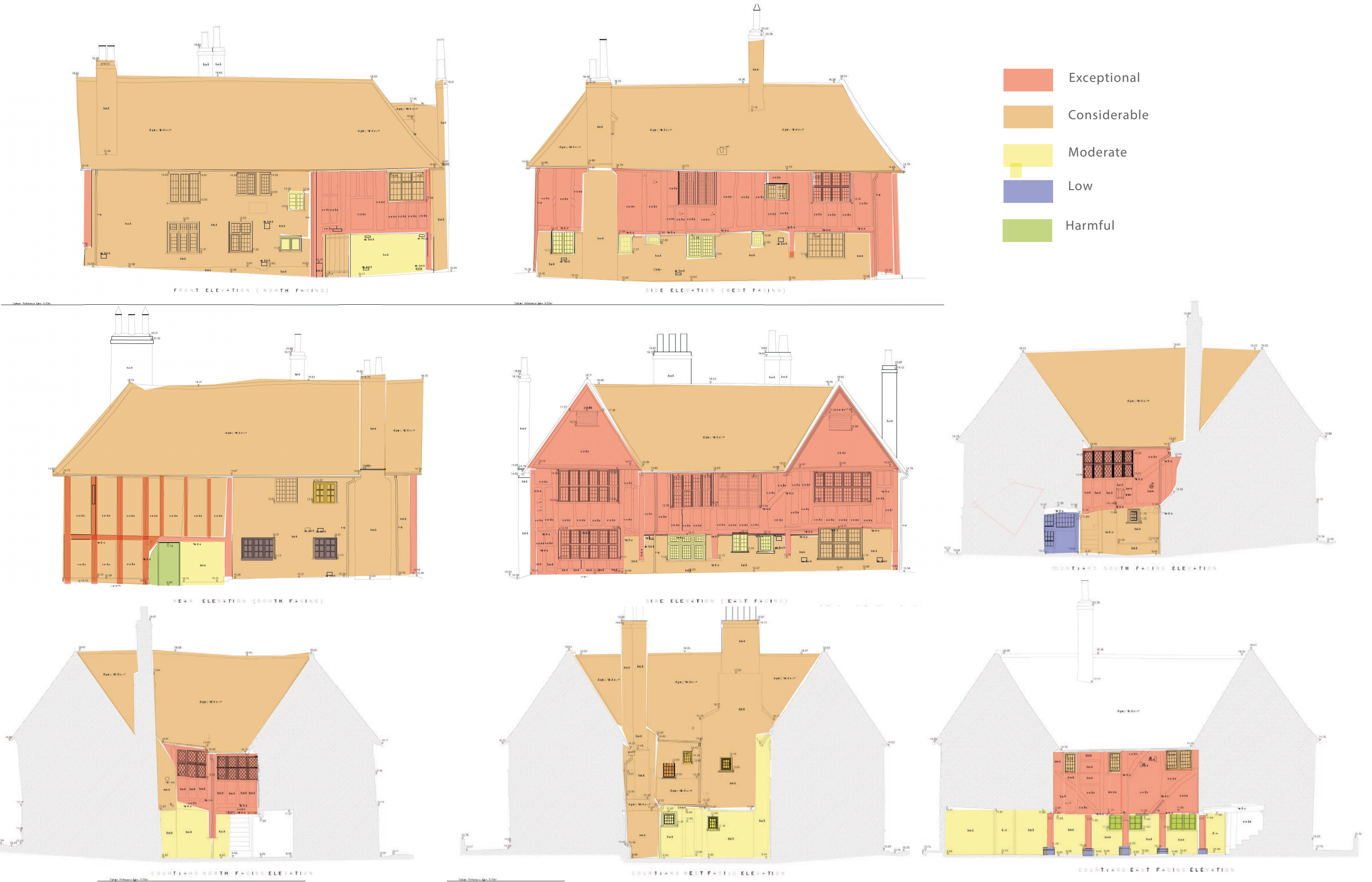
Ground Floor



First Floor



GROUND FLOOR



EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS AND ELEMENTS					
AREA	SIGNIFICANCE (see 3.5)	CONTRIBUTION TO OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE (see 3.6)	SENSIVITY TO CHANGE (see 3.6)	KEY ELEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
North elevation (entrance elevation)	This elevation has a high evidential and historical value of the development of the building and the articulation of chimneys and windows as part of the development of the building.	EXCEPTIONAL/CONSIDERABLE	HIGH	- Elements such as the more historic windows have an aesthetic value linked to the craft of their construction. . - Clay tile roof, assumed replaced - Brick chimneys	- There is evidence that the roof has been subject to modern, unsympathetic alterations and modifications over time. - The paint finishes on the brickwork and render are poor quality and unsympathetic in colour. - Windows are in a range of styles, whilst this provides evidence of the phasing of the buildijng more recent additions harm the overall aesthetic composition of the facade. - The existing external surfacing and ground level in the external area are accelerating damp issues in the building fabric. .
West elevation (gable)	- This elevation has a high evidential and historical value of the development of the building and the articulation of chimneys and windows as part of the development of the building. This elevation includes elements of timber that may have originated from the 14th Century. - This elevation faces the river and provides a contextual reference to the buildings history on this site.	EXCEPTIONAL/CONSIDERABLE	High	- The visible historic timber in the vertical stud arrangement - The elevation towards the garden and vista is of significance - the asymmetry of this elevation references the changing uses and phasing of the building	- Evidence of replacement ground floor windows - The window is unsympathetic in its framing and section. - The gable tilts inwards and is internally composed. - There is evidence of failure and rot to this elevation.

EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS AND ELEMENTS					
AREA	SIGNIFICANCE	CONTRIBUTION TO OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE (see 3.5)	SENSIVITY TO CHANGE (see 3.6)	KEY ELEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
East elevation (looking towards Seebohm garden)	This is the most symetrically composed elevation which suggests an intended relationship between the building and an open aspect in front. This elevation was largely re-constructed but it is believed may contain elements of 14th Century fabric	EXCEPTIONAL	VERY HIGH	- The symetrical compositon at first floor level. - Large 17th-18th century timber windows suggesting primary uses for these spaces.	- The rendering plaster is in poor condition, with cracks and damage area on the right-hand side of the façade. - Poor repairs and cement render visible.
South elevation	- This elevation was partially hidden for around 300 years. - It was formerly the side of the large hall on the first floor level and the gable that would have formed the nave of the Priory Chapel. - the elevation has been subject to a great deal of change and there are some 20th century interventions	Considerable/exceptional	HIGH / MODERATE	The south western areas of timber studwork are thought to be original and the position of the historic entrance to the building.	Areas of cement pointing, felt flashings and cement render have damaged this facade.

EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS AND ELEMENTS					
AREA	SIGNIFICANCE	CONTRIBUTION TO OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE (see 3.5)	SENSIVITY TO CHANGE (see 3.6)	KEY ELEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
Courtyard elevation)s	High evidential value to all internal elevations as they illustrate the changes to the building over the last 6 centuries and create an eclectic range of building fabric.	Exceptional / Considerable	Moderate/high	The timber framed cloister and the articulation of 16th/17th century century windows around the addition of chimneys.	- Advice to repoint or with an appropriate lime mortar to ensure breathability. - Areas of timber treatment are necessary.
Roofscape	- The regular but undulating roofscape is notable for its expression of the timber structure in the loft - The chimneys are evidence of the aggregate nature of the building's evolution. - Pitch of clay tile demonstrates a material consistency with surrounding heritage assets.	Considerable	HIGH	- Clay tiles - Brick chimney breasts with clay pots of varying periods, heights and detailing - Steep roof slope	- The significance of the roofscape, particularly the rear clay tile pitch, was affected by the ill-considered placement of services and poor cement flashings that have compromised the overall aesthetic quality and historic fabric. - Despite a slight sagging ridge Timbers, some loose and poorly installed lead flashings and decay of cast-iron rainwater goods. - There is evidence of rot to the projecting rafter ends around the eaves.
Boundary treatments	The property is surrounded by a timber fence which in poor condition	Harmful	LOW		The timber fence on conjunction with excessive vegetation is contributing to concealing the building from the public realm.

INTERIOR ROOMS AND ELEMENTS - GROUND FLOOR					
AREA	SIGNIFICANCE	CONTRIBUTION TO OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE (see 3.5)	SENSIVITY TO CHANGE (see 3.6)	KEY ELEMENTS OF SIGNIFICANCE	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
Common areas and stairs	Two of the stairs appear original and likely originate from the use of the building as a school. The southern stair may have also served the first floor great hall of the property when this was a dwelling. The eastern stair is a recent addition and was part of the 1960s revovation.	Exceptional	VERY HIGH	- There are elements such as panelling and historic joinery present around the two historic stairs. - The stairs to the garret in theloft appears to be contemporary with the stair below it and served as a drying area.	- The previous remedial works involving paint on the wood has had a detrimental effect on the heritage and internal aesthetics of the house. - Depending on the elements considered, the heritage significance fluctuates from exceptional to desirable to address inappropriate wood treatment - Areas have been subject to predominantly unsympathetic intervention over the years.
Internal flats generally. (refer to the attached condition survey).	- The significance of internal walls varies considerably, some of thev properties have been subject to comprehensive and intrusive works whichhave resulted in significant harm to the legibility internally. - Some of the properties (as illustrated by the condition survey) have areas of sensitive timber panelling and joinery. - Internal doors are largely more recent additions along with all internal fixtures and fittings. - There are elements of timber structure visible in most of the properties some of which may be original.	EXCEPTIONAL - Low	Low to High	- Timber framing, - Historic panelling - Plaster and lath ceilings and linings - Existing chimney features and breasts	- Some elements are not of historic value, such as much of the internal skirtings and architraves - The use of a concrete floor rather than a limecrete or other breathbale construction may have been damaging to the building foundations and timber base. - There is scope for change as demon - New internal services and penetrations - Papered layers, fixtures and non-breathable paint