

THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

THE BIGGIN Biggin Lane, Hitchin, Herts.

Project ref.: HN747
Site Code: HIT/BIG 09

Project Design: Historic Building Record

Prepared on behalf of Hitchin United Charities

by

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and
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1. Introduction

1.1 This Project Design has been prepared as a specification for a programme of archaeological recording works to be carried out at The Biggin, Biggin Lane, Hitchin, Herts. The investigation is being carried out as a Community Archaeology Project, sponsored by the Hitchin United Charities and under the joint aegis of the Heritage Network and the North Hertfordshire Museum Service.

1.2 The study area is located on the south side of Biggin Lane, and on the east bank of the river Hiz, centred on NGR TL 18550 29005. The Biggin consists of a square block of four ranges set around a central courtyard, parts of which are believed to be of 14th century date. It has been listed as Grade II*.

1.3 The building is currently divided into 12 self-contained apartments which are rented to teachers working or studying temporarily in the county. The owners are considering future uses for the site that might enhance its position as the second oldest building in Hitchin after the nearby parish church of St Mary, and return it to a more general community use.

1.4 The present document provides a methodology for a programme of fieldwork which will provide a detailed record of the fabric of the structure and the phases of its development leading, ultimately, to the publication of a definitive history of the building.

2. Research Design

AIMS

2.1 The principal aims of the project are to provide an objective baseline record of the building in its present condition in order to:

- Extend our understanding of the origins and development of the building (by identifying significant structural elements which might be dateable on stylistic criteria or by scientific methods such as dendrochronology, so that a phasing of the development sequence of the building might be drawn up)
- Define further programmes of research that might clarify uncertainties or test established hypotheses (for example the re-excavation of the Biggin garden, or the commissioning of a dendrochronological sequence)
- Advise the future maintenance and refurbishment of the building (by highlighting the significance of the historic fabric and identifying modern alterations and repairs)

HISTORICAL OUTLINE

The Priory

2.2 The Biggin was founded as the Gilbertine Priory of New Biggin (or Newbiggin) in 1361 in land donated for the purpose by Sir Edward de Kendale. The donation was small, consisting of a messuage, a toft and two acres of land known as Beriorchard, designed to support just three canons, one of whom was to act as Prior, with an annual income of just two shillings (Beresford-Webb 1969, 7; Stephenson 2005, 77). Sir Edward's memorial, depicting a recumbent knight, survives on a window ledge in the north aisle of in St Mary's church.

2.3 Part of the purpose of the Priory was for the canons to say masses daily for Edward III, Queen Isabella, Robert de Kendale and Margaret de Kendale, parents of Sir Edward. In A further donation in 1372 of houses and land in Willian was worth £2 4s 3d. Although the Victoria County History states that the Priory was held on mortgage to Sir Robert Turk at Buntingford in 1400, this is a misreading of the Inquisitio post Mortem of 2 Henry IV, which simply describes him as "patron of the chapel called Bygyne" (Beresford-Webb 1969, 8).

2.4 In 1402, an indulgence was granted to those giving alms for its upkeep on the Feast of the Annunciation and provision was made for eight priests secular and regular to hear confession. It has been suggested that the Priory of Newbiggin acted as a place of confession for the Gilbertine nuns in the double house at Chicksands; there is no evidence that New Biggin was also a double house (Stephenson 2005, 77). In 1455, William Gunwarby, Bishop of Dunkeld, bequeathed 3s 4d to New Biggin, as part of a range of gifts to various Gilbertine houses. Another bequest, by John Spearhauke in 1474, paid 4s to each priest in the town, specifically including Brother William of New Biggin, on condition that they were to say masses for his soul over a period of thirty days (Beresford-Webb 1969, 11). His memorial brass survives in St Mary's church. In 1518, William Chambre left 4s to New Biggin (although he left the Carmelite Firary 20s by the same bequest), but other early sixteenth century benefactions to religious houses in the town omit New Biggin (Stephenson 2005, 78).

The end of the Priory

2.5 The house escaped the dissolution of smaller houses in 1536, the order surrendering to Thomas Cromwell only in September 1538. From 29 September, a royal bailiff, Robert Marshall, was in residence. The documents relating to the dissolution of New Biggin have not survived, but it has been conjectured that Prior John Moulton surrendered it on 22 October 1538, on the day that Chicksands Priory was dissolved (Stephenson 2005, 79). He appears to have reported in person to the Chancellor of the Court of Augmentations, which may be why there is no written documentation of its surrender (Beresford-Webb 1969, 13).

2.6 The property was sold in 1544, while Robert Marshall was still in residence. It was purchased by John Cocks of Broxbourne, who became Sherriff of Hertfordshire in 1458 and Member of Parliament in 1553. Although it had been valued at £13 16s in 1535, in 1544 it was worth only £10 17s (Beresford-Webb 1969, 13). At some point, John Cocks sold it to William Croocar, as he left it to his sons Thomas and William in March 1570; by 27 August 1587, Robert Snagge, second son of Thomas Snagge of Letchworth Hall was resident (Hine 1927, 161), although deeds of sale were not exchanged until 1594 (Beresford-Webb 1969, 14). On his death in 1606, the house passed to his sister Anne Dallison, a widow.

2.7 A painted wooden wall panel survives in the collections of North Hertfordshire Museums, depicting a scene in which a group of lawyers are speaking; their dress places them in the 1590s or early decades of the seventeenth century. There are reports of other painted panels (Hine 1927, 162-3) and another by a pupil at the Girls' Grammar School, who describes a scene depicting ships, which may also date from this period; it is not known if any of these survives.

Use as a school and almshouses

2.8 The property passed to Joseph Kempe in the 1630s, who turned it into a boarding school with accommodation for six servants and two masters as well as the pupils. Extensive alterations would have been necessary and are probably still to be found in the fabric of the building. On his death in 1654; he asked that it be used for the benefit of the poor (Beresford-Webb 1969, 15). However, this appears not to have happened, as it continued to be run by his brother John as a school. A new set of trustees was appointed on 17 May 1677, at which time John Moore seems to have become the master of the school; the parish burial register records the interment of a scholar, Robert Shrib, in 1698 (Hine 1927, 169).

2.9 Annie Kempe, Joseph's widow, died in 1723, by which time the school had closed and the Overseer of the Poor made a request that the Trustees hire the building as a Poor House (Beresford-Webb 1969, 15). By this time, there was already a group of 'Kempe's Widowes' living there and the Overseer of the Poor agreed that they should be employed in parish work; they seem to have been paid 15s a month (Beresford-Webb 1969, 19). A building was added to the south-western corner of the house in 1730 and was eventually demolished in 1958.

2.10 The poorhouse moved to Bancroft in 1812, after the Trustees had acquired the Manor House, and the Biggin was converted to provide a home for 18 elderly women. A pump was installed in the courtyard and the lead was stolen from the roof in 1856. In 1933, the Trustees decided to find alternative accommodation for the eighteen women (only seventeen were resident

as one of the rooms had no direct light). The Charity Commissioners visited in April 1939 and decided that the building was unsuitable for almshouses and should be sold. By 1947, there were rumours that it was to be demolished, prompting the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings to write to Reginald Hine, the local historian, enlisting his support. The Trustees asked for his advice, but he committed suicide in 1949 and nothing further was done.

2.11 The building was Listed on 13 April 1951 under the Town And Country Planning Act (1947), securing its preservation. The Trustees approached the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings for a grant towards its restoration and in September 1952, John McGregor surveyed it and produced a plan (reproduced in Beresford Webb 1969, between pages 25 and 26). He concluded that “[i]n its present condition, it is definitely not suitable for habitation and the sanitary arrangements are most inadequate and ill-conceived; on the other hand, it is perfectly possible to recondition the timber-framed structure. All things considered, I feel that the retention of the building for its present use is most desirable (sic)... It would... be possible to provide 12 habitation, 6 on each floor”.

2.12 Nevertheless, Derrick Seebohm, one of the Trustees, was sceptical that the building could be saved and Hitchin Urban District Council decided in 1953 that restoration was not feasible. Over the next year, arguments raged between those in favour of demolition and those who wished to see the Biggin restored. After the delivery of McGregor’s report to the Council on 8 July 1954, both the Trustees and Council agreed to the restoration and work started in 1958, at a cost of over £16,000.

The Listing record

2.13 According to the List, the building is seventeenth-century in date: *“Early seventeenth-century almshouses built in four ranges of two 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 louvered 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”*.

2.14 This is clearly wrong, as a panel in one of the upstairs rooms bears the date 1577 in a style appropriate to the date, while the painted panels were executed for Robert Snagge, who died in 1606. Moreover, Reginald Hine (1927, 161) reports the discovery of an oak fourteenth-century window in situ in the south wall of the Biggin in 1907, although he expressed scepticism at the idea that the south range might be the Priory church.

2.15 There is clearly seventeenth-century brickwork in the chimneys, particularly that in the south-eastern corner of the courtyard and later brickwork repairs on the north and south sides. However, even a cursory examination makes it apparent that there is much older work throughout the building.

Beresford-Webb’s survey

2.16 Following the inspection for Listing in 1951, the Biggin was resurveyed in 1954 and June 1968. John McGregor concluded that it was fourteenth-century in origin, with medieval work surviving on the north, east and south sides, with the western range added in the sixteenth

century. Christopher Beresford-Webb, though, recognised that it was not big enough to incorporate a church, a chapter house, refectory, canons' dorter and lay brethrens' dorter, even for the minimum complement of three canons provided for in the foundation charter.

2.17 His solution to the conundrum was to suggest that when it became a house in 1545, it needed a lot of repairs, while the eastern end had been destroyed. He suggested that a first floor was inserted into the nave in the south range, supported on brick walls to make a great hall, an eastern infill was created between the church on the south and the north range, creating a long gallery that ran the full width of the building and that chimney stacks were added. He set out to test his hypothesis by excavating to the east of the building, beginning work on 4 September 1958. The excavation was closed unceremoniously by Hitchin Urban District Council in July 1969, before firm conclusions had been reached about the discoveries.

The excavation

2.18 The excavation was directed by Christopher Beresford-Webb as part of a student project while he was at Putteridgebury College. Although he produced an interim report in the summer of 1969, before the closure of the excavation, promising a full report, it was never actually published and the location of the records and finds is currently unknown. Dr Beresford-Webb remained in Hitchin for a few years before qualifying as a lawyer. He specialised in representing traveller gypsies, moved to the West Country and eventually retired to Gozo, where he died in January 2009.

2.19 The only record of the work carried out in 1968-9 is a typescript copy of his student dissertation housed in Hitchin Museum and a number of newspaper stories that post-date the writing of the dissertation. These seem to be the only available account of the work. There was evidently a problem in Beresford-Webb's relations with Hitchin Museum and he fell out with Mary Gadd, the curator, although the Assistant Curator took part in the excavation. He also argued with John Moss-Eccardt at Letchworth Museum, who felt that the work should have been carried out under the auspices of the North Herts Archaeological Society and under his own direction. The final straw seems to have been when one of the local councillors jumped into the excavation trench uninvited during a site visit in July 1969, declared there to be nothing worth investigating and promptly closed the site on the grounds that it was needed for a car park.

2.20 Hitchin Urban District Council had laid a drain in Biggin Lane to the north of the site early in 1968, but no traces of foundations were seen. None had been noted when the building of 1730 was demolished in 1958, while the River Hiz lies only a few metres to the west, so the only place worth investigating was to the east of the standing building. The building survey carried out by Beresford-Webb showed that the north and south ranges were truncated on this side, confirming that the building had once extended further towards Queen Street.

The stratigraphy

2.21 The topsoil varied in depth across the site, increasing to the east. Against the east wall of the present building, there was a minimum of 5 cm, increasing in depth to a maximum of 50 cm at the Queen Street end. This sealed a sandy soil containing mortar and rubble, generally around 18 cm thick, beneath which was a very rubbly layer between 5 and 18 cm thick. These appear to

have been demolition deposits. This sealed the foundations of the Priory building and a humic layer around 30 cm thick. There was also a chalk floor 18 cm thick to the east of The Biggin, which overlay the foundations, suggesting either that the conventual buildings had more than one phase or that following the transfer to lay hands after the Dissolution, there was rebuilding to the east of the buildings. However, the date of this secondary floor is unclear.

The foundations

2.22 The building had dwarf walls, consisting of mortared stone projecting about 20 cm above the contemporary ground surface, resting on foundations of rubble and hardcore 23 cm deep. Beresford-Webb does not indicate what type of stone was used, but it may have been Totternhoe stone or another relatively robust chalk stone. The presumed timber framing of the superstructure rested on top of these dwarf walls. They projected 13.7 m east from the existing building and were at the same level as in the existing building.

Floors

2.23 There was a layer of packed chalk on the south side, overlain by plain red ceramic floor tiles 5 cm thick. This would have been where the quire of the church would have been and the Gilbertines are known to have insisted on plain church interiors. This tiled floor was raised on a step up of 30 cm just east of the present building, marking the transition from nave to quire. There was also similar flooring on the northern side, with evidence for a fireplace, suggesting a room of some status in this position. Between the two was a beaten clay floor, its extent marked by flimsy walls. At the east end was a circular staircase with a central wooden post.

2.24 The floors had sixteenth-century pottery on them and fourteenth-century pottery under the floor to the north-east. Unfortunately, it is not known what became of the pottery, although a couple of sherds were described in a 1970s publication of medieval pottery from Chicksands Priory (Moorhouse 1970).

The plan

2.25 The excavation demonstrated that the church was on the south side of the complex, the southern wing of The Biggin including most of the nave, which is a typical Gilbertine arrangement. Unusually, the quire and presbytery had an apsidal east end, which would have been an archaising feature in the fourteenth century and may be an adaptation to local conditions. From his structural survey, Beresford-Webb suspected that there may have been a gallery at the western end of the nave, which would lead to the Prior's lodging in the south-western corner of the Priory.

2.26 The remainder of the western wing, north of the Prior's lodging, would have been the lay brethren's dorter and kitchen, while the canons' dorter lay to the north-east, approached by the spiral staircase at the east end of the site. The warming room lay beneath it. Also on the north side was the canons' frater (refectory), the evidence of the fireplace suggesting that there were cooking facilities here. A well was found just east of the present building. The chapter house was not located but may have lain between the frater and the passage leading from the dorter into the quire.

“Charlie the monk”

2.27 Towards the end of the excavation, in June 1969, a human skeleton was discovered. Its precise location is unclear and from the photographic evidence, appears to have straddled the boundary between The Biggin and the Seebohm Garden, which would place it at the east end of the complex. It had important legal implications for the excavation, which up to that point had been a slow amateur project, carried out in the participants’ spare time. It was assumed to be the burial of one of the canons as Beresford-Webb believed the remains to be male. However, it is not clear that his statement to the press that he was going to take the remains to the British Museum for proper identification was actually carried out and a request for information from the museum in 2008 drew a blank. There is therefore no definite identification of the age or sex of the remains and it was possible for lay patrons to be buried in the church. However, the position of the burial indicates that it may have been made in the Chapter House, in which case it was possibly one of the Priors. The exhumation of the skeleton caused local controversy and was one of the reasons why the excavation was never completed: some of the old ladies at The Biggin almshouses believed that its discovery had unleashed a malevolent ghost, causing unexplained illnesses.

Overview of the building

2.28 The Biggin is an unusual building, although it superficially resembles an early modern courtyard house. If, as seems likely, much of it is part of the mid fourteenth-century Priory of New Bigging, it would be the second oldest building in the town, although it is not generally recognised as such. Its ecclesiastical past is concealed beneath later alterations and it is still Listed as a seventeenth-century structure. It survives because it was not highly valued in the past to the extent that it was nearly lost in the 1950s.

RESEARCH AGENDA

2.29 Although Christopher Beresford-Webb’s work in 1968-9 marked a major improvement in understanding the development of the building, his only known statement on it was made before the end of the excavation and without the benefit of longer reflection. Some of his assumptions are probably wrong: he reconstructed the nave of the church with a wall to separate male canons from nuns, perhaps on the assumption that it was a Gilbertine double house, which it does not appear to have been, and it would be useful to know if he had excavated evidence for a dividing wall.

The standing buildings

1. An accurate survey of the timber framework is a necessary first stage in understanding the structure. Previous surveys concentrated on the plan of the rooms: a full record of the precise positions of timbers, including evidence for reuse, will be required.
2. A record of the joints between timbers, including the roof structure and different mouldings and chamfers is needed.
3. Measurements of the different types of brick used in parts of the building is necessary. The types of brick found should then be compared with bricks in Hitchin buildings of known date between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The excavated material

4. An audit of the evidence we currently possess from Christopher Beresford-Webb's unpublished excavation will allow an assessment of how far it will be possible to write up the project.
5. A thorough search should be made for any other records and finds that might survive.

Buried remains

6. Geophysical survey of the garden east of the buildings and the Seebohm Garden outside its present curtilage may help to elucidate unclear elements of Beresford-Webb's provisional plan.
7. Geophysical survey between the building and the River Hiz may show whether there were structures or culverts in this area.

Documentary research

8. F M Stephenson (2005) summarises the documentary evidence for the medieval Priory, amplifying the extracts in Beresford-Webb's (1969) dissertation. However, there are statements in Hine (1927) that are not backed up by references to primary sources and it is not clear if they are Hine's extrapolations beyond the data or if there is evidence to confirm them.
9. Stephenson (2005) concentrates on the medieval history of the building, but it is evident that there is much of interest in the early modern and modern periods, with the use of the building as a manor house, as a school, as the town's poorhouse and as almshouses. An audit of records held by Hitchin United Charities would be a useful first step.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1999, *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures*. (IFA)

Moorehouse, S A 1970 Medieval pottery from Chicksands and the Biggin, Hitchin. *Beds Archaeol J* 5, 104-7.

Stephenson, F M, 2005 The Gilbertine priory of New Biggin at Hitchin. *Herts Archaeol & Hist* (2004-5) 14, 77-80

3. Method Statement

2.1 A programme of site visits is proposed to inspect and record the structure of the buildings.

2.2 Recording and analysis will follow the principles set out in English Heritage's guidance document, *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006) and will include measured drawings, photography and a written description.

Measured Drawing

2.3 A drawn record of the structure of the historic buildings will be prepared. This will include plans and elevations, supplemented by sections illustrating vertical relationships at a similar scale, where appropriate.

2.4 From this information, using CAD software, it will be possible to compile, where appropriate:

- plans showing the layout of the site and the internal layout of the buildings;
- sections showing the vertical relationships within the buildings;
- elevations to assist with the investigation and interpretation of the buildings;
- phase plans showing the sequence of construction or alteration of the buildings.

2.5 Additional drawings recording significant structural details and any architectural detailing and decoration will also be produced, as appropriate.

Photography

2.6 A photographic record will be made in order to show the appearance of the buildings and evidence of their historical development. The record will include general views of the buildings, both internal and external, and specific detail, as appropriate to the level of record defined.

2.7 The photographic record will be made on monochrome film using high quality medium format equipment, and on digital media using high quality DSLR equipment (minimum 8 megapixel resolution), bracketed and post-processed to enhance definition.

2.8 Where possible, natural light will be used for all photography but artificial lighting will be available if required.

2.9 A full log will be kept of all photographs and this will be cross-referenced to contact prints and the digital archive.

2.10 Scales will be used in all detail photographs, and where appropriate in general photographs.

2.11 The photographic record will be supplemented by digital snapshots taken to support the drawn record.

Written Record

2.12 The written account will be based on observation carried out on site in the course of the fieldwork, and additional research using readily accessible primary and secondary sources. It will include:

- the location of the buildings, including NGR, and their statutory status;
- an account of the overall form of the buildings with in indication of their developmental sequence;
- an account of the past and present use of the buildings and their component parts, together with any details of fixtures, fittings, plant and machinery associated with them;
- evidence for the former existence of demolished structures or plant;
- information derived from primary sources;
- information derived from secondary sources;
- a discussion of the past and present setting of the buildings;
- a discussion of the local, regional and national importance of the buildings, in terms of their origin, purpose, form, construction, design, materials or status.

Report

3.1 The project report, drawing together collected the written, drawn and photographic data, will be produced upon the conclusion of the fieldwork.

3.2 A summary of the results will be uploaded to the OASIS database of the Archaeology Data Service together with a digital copy of the report.

3.3 When available, the full report on the work, will be published in an appropriate format.

Archive Deposition

3.4 It is intended that the full archive of the present project will be deposited with the *North Hertfordshire Museum Service* after publication.

4. Structure and General Practice

Project Management

4.1 The Project will be jointly administered and co-ordinated by David Hillelson BA (HONS) MIFA, and Keith Fitzpatrick Matthews BA (HONS), who will act as Project Directors:

- David is *Archaeological Director* of the Heritage Network. He holds an honours degree in archaeology from the University of Durham and has extensive experience of the management of archaeological projects, and of fieldwork in both urban and rural contexts. He specialises in the recording of historic buildings.
- Keith is the *Archaeology Officer* for North Hertfordshire Museums. He holds an honours degree in archaeology from the University of Lancaster and is a PhD candidate in the University of Liverpool. He was previously Lecturer in Archaeology at the University of Chester and Senior Archaeologist with Chester City Council's Archaeological Service.

Staffing

4.2 The building recording will be carried out by local volunteers under the supervision of the Project Directors.

Standards

4.3 The project will follow the Heritage Network's general operational procedures for archaeology are documented in a series of manuals which are available for consultation in our offices.

4.4 The Heritage Network is registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) and the project will be undertaken in accordance with the *Code of Conduct* of the IFA and the relevant sections of the professional standards and guidelines set by the IFA, the United Kingdom Institute of Conservation, the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (English Heritage), the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers (ALGAO) and such others as may be appropriate to the effective execution of the project.

4.5 The project will be undertaken in accordance with all relevant Health and Safety regulations, and recognises the guidance set out in the *SCAUM* (2002) document *Health and Safety in Field Archaeology*, as updated. A risk assessment for the project has been prepared and is attached as Appendix 1.

4.6 As a Community Archaeology project, participants are covered by the North Hertfordshire District Council's Public and Employer's Liability insurances.

Copyright

4.7 Copyright on all supporting project documentation will rest with the originating organisation (either Heritage Network or North Hertfordshire District Council). Copyright on all project records will rest jointly with the Heritage Network, North Hertfordshire District Council

and the Hitchin United Charities under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988*, with all rights reserved. Authors of any original text, photographs and drawings will retain the right to be identified as the author of that documentation as defined in the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* (Chapter IV, s.79).

North Hertfordshire District Council Museums RISK ASSESSMENT – BUILDING SURVEY

Project : The Biggin Community Archaeology Project Method Statement No: 1
Client : Hitchin United Charities For the attention of :
Date : 25-26 July 2009 From: Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews
Site Code HIT/BIG 09
Proposed Start Date: 25 July 2009 Review Date: 29 July 2009
Description: Survey of medieval building in Biggin Lane, Hitchin

Details of tasks to be carried out	Potential Hazard	Before Control Measures Applied			Control Measures	After Control Measures Applied		
		A Likelihood	B Severity Rating	Overall Risk Rating A x B		A Likelihood	B Severity Rating	Overall Risk Rating A x B
Survey of building	1. Slips/trips/falls Hidden unidentified hazards, concealed objects, loose cables, beams in attics. Risk of serious injury. 2. Lone Working Accidents, violence. Risk of injury or death. 3. Effects of Work in Confined Spaces Heat, disorientation. 4. Work in Historic Buildings Low ceilings, exposed timber beams, uneven floors and stairs. 5. Work in Low Light Conditions Risks 1, 3 and 4 potentially exacerbated 6. Discovery of hazardous materials (e.g. asbestos) during work.	1	3	3 Low	Refer to SSWD 12.2	1	1	1 Low
		1	2	2 Low	Refer to SSWD 14	1	1	1 Low
		3	4	12 Medium	Refer to SSWD 15	1	1	1 Low
		2	3	6 Low	Refer to SSWD 13, 15, 16	1	3	3 Low
		2	3	6 Medium	Refer to SSWD 16	1	3	3 Low
		1	2	2 Low	Refer to SSWD 12.5	1	1	1 Low

North Hertfordshire District Council Museums

SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK DOCUMENT

To be read in conjunction with Risk Assessment

Project Ref.:	HIT/BIG 09	Version:	1	Date of Issue:	25 July 2009
Project Location:	The Biggin, Biggin Lane, Hitchin				
Project Description:	Community recording of an historic timber-framed building				
Description of Activity:	Working on Site – Archaeological recording (drawing and photography)				
1. QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED Project co-director is a member of North Hertfordshire District Council's Museums Service					
2. TRAINING REQUIRED Briefing of volunteer site staff before commencement of fieldwork					
3. EXPERIENCE REQUIRED Team leader should have at least 6 months site experience.					
4. PLANT & TOOLS REQUIRED Clipboards, drafting film, pencils, measuring equipment, cameras, tripods					
5. SAFETY EQUIPMENT REQUIRED None					
6. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT REQUIRED None needed.					
7. SPECIFIC CONTROL LEGISLATION, STANDARDS <i>The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974</i> <i>Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 & ACOP L24</i>					
8. ADDITIONAL REFERENCE DOCUMENTATION Council Health and Safety Manual					
9. CONTACTS FOR ADVICE & GUIDANCE Ros Allwood, Museums Manager – 01462 435197					
10. PRINCIPAL HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS To ensure that all voluntary staff working on site understand and work to the required safety standard to protect both themselves, their colleagues and any other person who may be affected by their work. Staff must also work to the safety standards required by the management on the site.					
11. AUTHORISATION, COMMUNICATION, REPORTING AND RECORDING REQUIREMENTS Authorisation for working on the site will come from the project manager. Any health and safety issues which arise should be addressed to the project directors in the first instance. Reporting of accidents should be undertaken in line with statutory requirements and the council's requirements, as contained in the Health and Safety Manual.					

North Hertfordshire District Council Museums

SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK DOCUMENT

To be read in conjunction with Risk Assessment

12. GENERAL

12.1 Hazards:

- Slips/trips/falls
- Lone working
- Effects of work in confined spaces
- Work in low light conditions
- Discovery of hazardous materials

Precautions:

12.2 Before commencing work:

- Check for trip hazards
- Ensure workers are familiar with layout of building

12.3 Staff should have experience of:

- Working with experienced member of staff
- CDM regulations (where applicable)
- Other Health and Safety Practices (all applicable health and safety legislation should be disseminated via safety induction by Site Director. The Site Director is responsible for provision of welfare facilities including facilities for washing hands)

12.4 Mark and Avoid

- Mark off with high visibility tape any areas to be avoided.

12.5 Safe treatment and removal of hazardous materials

- Identify potentially hazardous materials, leave *in situ* and contact Health & Safety Officer (Les Davison, (01462) 474600) for advice on safe treatment and disposal.

13. SLIPS/TRIPS/FALLS

- Check floors for obvious hazards
- Keep a tidy working area
- Remove all trip hazards
- Mark any non-removable hazards
- Secure loose cables
- Ensure sharp objects are covered to prevent anyone impaling themselves.
- Avoid unstable areas if possible.

14. LONE WORKING

- Recording will only be carried out with teams of two persons as a minimum.

15. EFFECTS OF WORK IN CONFINED SPACES

- Avoid long periods of work in attics.

North Hertfordshire District Council Museums
SAFE SYSTEM OF WORK DOCUMENT
To be read in conjunction with Risk Assessment

16. WORK IN LOW LIGHT CONDITIONS

- Use portable lights where practicable.

17. WELFARE FACILITIES AND SITE RULES

- No eating on site
- No smoking on site
- No running on site
- No alcohol or non-prescription drugs on site
- No lone working
- Correct PPE at all times (hard hat, high visibility jacket and steel toe capped boots when plant on site)
- No entry into excavations without permission from the Site Manager/Director
- No obstruction to Public Rights of Way

All staff have access to a toilet and washing facilities provided by the residents of the properties.

AUTHORITY

Prepared by Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews

Authorised by Keith Fitzpatrick-Matthews Position: NHDC Archaeology Officer	Signed:
Date: 20 July 2009	Revised