

HERITAGE NETWORK



THOMPSON'S YARD **Tilehouse Street, Hitchin, Herts.**

HN464

Desk-based Archaeological Assessment



THE HERITAGE NETWORK LTD

Registered with the Institute of Field Archaeologists as an Archaeological Organisation

Archaeological Director: David Hillelson, BA MIFA

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Desk-based Archaeological Assessment

Prepared on behalf of Lantern Construction Ltd

by

Helen Ashworth BA AIFA

Report No.236

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The cover photograph shows a view of the site from the west

Acknowledgements

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Summary

Site name and address:	Thompson's Yard, Tilehouse Street, Hitchin SG5 2DY		
County:	Hertfordshire	District:	North Herts D C
Village/town:	Hitchin	Parish:	Hitchin
Planning reference:	N/A	NGR:	TL 1826 2897
Client name and address:	Lantern Construction Ltd, 56 West Hill, Hitchin SG5 2HY		
Project Reference:	HN460	Other reference:	N/a

Synopsis:

In order to assess the archaeological risk posed by a proposal to construct three new dwellings on a former builder's yard between 84 and 85 Tilehouse Street, Hitchin, the Heritage Network was commissioned by Lantern Construction Ltd to undertake a desk-based archaeological assessment of the site.

The map evidence shows that the study area has remained largely undeveloped since at least the mid 17th century, and is likely to have remained so since the late medieval period. Archaeological remains of late prehistoric, Romano-British, Anglo-Saxon and medieval date have been recorded in the vicinity.

On the basis of the known evidence, there is a high risk that archaeological remains, of potential significance, could be preserved on the site, and would be damaged, destroyed or otherwise affected by its development. The actual nature of such remains, if they are present, can only be characterised with certainty by intrusive investigation.

1. Introduction

1.1 This study has been prepared at the request of *Lantern Construction Ltd*, as a Desk-based Archaeological Assessment of a development site at Thompson's Yard, Tilehouse Street, Hitchin, Herts.

1.2 The study area comprises an irregularly shaped open yard, measuring approximately 360m². It lies on the northeastern side of Tilehouse Street, centred at NGR TL 1826 2897, and is bounded to the southwest by the line of Tilehouse Street; to the northwest by no.84 Tilehouse Street; to the northeast by properties accessed from Hall's Yard; and on the southeast by Hall's Yard and no.85 Tilehouse Street (see Figure 1).

1.3 Tilehouse Street lies on the south-western edge of Hitchin, within Archaeological Area 142 (AA142) as defined in Policy 16 of the District Local Plan. This defines the medieval borough of Hitchin and encompasses the medieval core of the town.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.4 The aim of the present document has been to provide:

- A comprehensive overview of the development of landuse on and in the vicinity of the study area from readily accessible sources;
- An assessment of the risk that development within the study area might encounter archaeological remains, and of the significance of such remains.

1.5 The research has followed the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-based Assessments* published by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and includes reference, where appropriate, to:

- Archaeological databases
- Historical documents
- Cartographic and pictorial documents
- Aerial photographs
- Geotechnical information
- Secondary and statutory sources

1.6 Repositories consulted include:

- Hertfordshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (HSMR)
- Hitchin Museum (HITM)
- Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies

COMPETENCE

1.7 The Heritage Network is an independent practice specialising in archaeology and the historic environment. Founded in 1992, the company has undertaken a wide variety of commercial archaeological projects for clients involved in housing and industrial development, pipeline and road construction, agriculture and landscaping. As a *Registered Archaeological Organisation*, the company is monitored annually by the Institute of Field Archaeologists to ensure that its work meets the highest professional standards.

1.8 Projects are administered and co-ordinated by David Hillelson, the Heritage Network's Archaeological Director, an established archaeologist with extensive experience of the management of archaeological projects in both urban and rural environments. He holds an honours degree in archaeology from the University of Durham, and is a Member of the *Institute of Field Archaeologists*. He has been the practice's principal officer since 1992.

1.9 Research projects are managed by Helen Ashworth. She holds a degree in English and History from Middlesex Polytechnic, a Post-graduate Diploma in Librarianship, a Post-graduate Certificate in Field Archaeology from the University of Oxford, and she is an Associate of the *Institute of Field Archaeologists*. She has over twenty years of practical archaeological experience in local government, with the Royal Commission for the Historical Monuments of England, and in private practice.

2. Evidence

TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

2.1 Tilehouse Street lies on the approximate southwestern edge of the Hitchin Gap, a glacially derived deep cutting. The solid geology is Lower Chalk, with a deep drift covering of fluvio-glacial sands and gravels of the Anglian phase of the Quaternary period. The chalk bedrock is present at considerable depths below the fluvio-glacial deposits. Locally the soils are derived from the St Albans Association and comprise a brown earth derived from the underlying sands and gravels.

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Prehistoric

2.2 The archaeological evidence from the town suggests that it was important in the prehistoric period. The proximity of the Icknield Way, a major prehistoric route between East Anglia and Wessex, would doubtless have drawn settlers to the region. The light fertile soils in the valley of the River Hiz would also have been attractive.

2.3 Until recently the evidence for prehistoric activity on the western side of the town was limited. The majority of flint implements had been found in the Highbury and Benslow areas, on higher ground to the northeast of the study area, a part of the town that was extensively quarried for gravel and brickearth in the 19th century. Flint implements of Palaeolithic date (c.450,000bc – 10,000bc) were found at Wratten Road (HSMR 288) approximately 300m west of the study area. Aerial photography has identified two potential ring ditches in Priory Park, possibly the remains of ploughed out Bronze Age (c.2500bc – 800bc) burial mounds (HSMR 7417 and 7418) approximately 500m south of the present site.

2.4 Recent archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of Paynes Park, approximately 120m north of the study area, has identified the remains of a substantial prehistoric enclosure and associated field system (Butler, 2004). Pottery and flints recovered from these features suggest that they date to the late Neolithic/ early Bronze Age. A small number of flint implements, including a broken blade of Mesolithic (c.10,000bc – c.3500bc) date and three worked flints of late Neolithic/early Bronze Age (c.2500bc – 1500bc) date, were collected from a medieval plough soil during trial trenching at 35 Tilehouse Street, approximately 110m north-west of the study area (West, nd).

Iron Age

2.5 There is surprisingly little evidence for Iron Age activity in Hitchin. Sites of this period are known from the surrounding area, including hillforts at Ravensburgh Castle near Hexton and Wilbury Hill, Letchworth. A considerable late pre-Roman Iron Age settlement was also established at Baldock. Excavations at the eastern end of Portmill Lane, approximately 450m north-east of the study area, found slight evidence of Iron Age activity, including sherds of middle and late Iron Age pottery (HSMR 6455). A number of undated pits and postholes may represent the remains of structures dating to this

period (G.Burleigh, pers. comm.). Other chance finds of late Iron Age artefacts were recorded on the periphery of the town in the 19th century, including a bronze coin from Walsworth.

2.6 The lack of evidence may reflect a genuine lack of occupation, although the number of prehistoric findspots in the vicinity of the town suggests that it was an attractive spot for early settlement. It is more likely that later activity has destroyed the ephemeral remains of Iron Age occupation.

Romano-British

2.7 The settlement pattern of the Hitchin area in the Roman period suggests a landscape of farmsteads and villas, some of which undoubtedly had Iron Age antecedents. Villa sites are known from the vicinity of the town, including at Ninesprings and Purwell (Ransom, 1888, 43-4) on the eastern side (HSMR 468). Evidence of occupation, and an associated inhumation and cremation cemetery has also been recorded at Foxholes, approximately 1km west of the present site (HSMR 1184). Further cremation burials, with accompanying pottery vessels, were found at Taylors Hill, approximately 400m south-east of the site (HSMR 1201).

2.8 A number of artefacts of this period have also been found within a kilometre of the study area, including coins and metalwork from Priory Park, approximately 700m south of the present site (HSMR 1175) and part of a quernstone, used for grinding grain, from Bancroft (HSMR 1203). Roman glass vessels were also found on Bancroft (HSMR 1200) and Roman bricks have been identified in the tower of St Mary's Church (HSMR 4391). A small amount of Roman pottery was recovered from a later plough soil during archaeological evaluation at 35 Tilehouse Street (West, nd). Building material, including fragments of roofing tile and brick, were also recovered from the fill of a post-medieval kiln on the same site.

2.9 Archaeological fieldwork in the vicinity of the town centre has also recovered evidence of Roman activity. Residual pottery sherds and coins were recovered from later features during excavations at The Biggin, approximately 300m east of the present site, in 1969 (NHDC archives) and at Portmill Lane (HSMR 6474). Excavations on the site of the former Hitchin Laundry on Queen Street, approximately 350m east of the study area, uncovered a small number of Roman features, consisting of pits and postholes, which were located in the north-western corner of the site (Stirk, 2002). Large quantities of Roman pottery and building material were also recovered from later features on the site. Recent work by the Museum of London, on various sites in the town centre, has also revealed evidence for Roman activity in the town. A number of late Roman pits and ditches were identified during trial trenching in Portmill Lane and Biggin Lane (Aitken, 2003).

Anglo-Saxon

2.10 The name 'Hitchin' is believed to have stemmed from the name *Hicce*, the Anglo-Saxon tribe thought to have been established in this area by the 8th century AD. The Tribal Hidage, a Mercian tribute list of 7th/8th century date, documents two tribes in the area, the *Gifle* and the *Hicce*. The *Gifle* appear to have occupied the valley of the River Ivel in Bedfordshire and the *Hicce* settled in the region of the River Hiz (Friel, 1982).

The limited documentary sources available indicate that Hitchin was a Mercian royal estate by the 8th century and the Hicce formed one of the smaller clan units within Mercia. It has been suggested that Hitchin had been an important strategic stronghold for the Mercian rulers from as early as the mid 7th century, as it lay on the southern border of the Mercian kingdom and guarded the route to London via a gap in the Chilterns (Offer, 2002).

2.11 A lost document written by John de Blomville, a founder benefactor of the Priory of the White Carmelites, and quoted in a 19th century History of Hitchin by William Dunnage, states that King Offa and his nobles founded a church and associated religious community in Hitchin in 792 AD (Offer, 1992, 1). As this seems late for an original foundation, it may indicate either a refounding or extending of an earlier church (Burleigh & Stevenson, 1994). Excavations in 1911, during restoration work on St Mary's church, revealed possible Saxon foundations and may indicate that the present structure, which was originally built in the 12th century, is located on the same site as the earlier church (Hunns & Bryant, 2002, 3).

2.12 A 12th century document, *De Inventione Sanctae Crucis*, relates that in King Canute's reign Hitchin was held by Tofig (or Tovi) the Proud, *staller* (marshall and master of the horse) to the king, a position of considerable importance and influence (Huyshe, 1906). He founded the Church of the Holy Cross at Waltham to house the Holy Rood, a miracle-working crucifix discovered in Somerset. The church was endowed with lands in Hitchin and Waltham. After Tofig's death, his son Adelstan succeeded to the position of staller and to the lands, but later forfeited them. Edward the Confessor granted the lands, including Hitchin, to Earl Harold of Wessex, later King Harold. He rebuilt the church at Waltham and endowed it with eighteen manors, including Hitchin. This grant was confirmed by King Edward.

2.13 Evidence for Anglo-Saxon occupation in the town, from the 5th to the 10th centuries AD, has come from a number of finds of high status artefacts in the vicinity of the study area. Two early Saxon brooches were found in Priory Park, between approximately 625m and 800m south of the site (HSMR 2298 and HSMR 6535). A decorated bronze pin, of 8th or 9th century date, came from the site of St Andrew's School, now the site of the open air market, approximately 250m north-east of the study area (HSMR 1612). Coins, including a silver *sceatta* from Pirton Road (NHDC 1470) and a late 9th century hoard, now dispersed (NHDC 441), have also been recorded from within a kilometre radius of the present site.

2.14 Evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement has been identified along Queen Street. Two inhumation burials were revealed during archaeological evaluation at 40 Queen Street, approximately 280m north-east of the study area (Davies, 2001). Both were aligned approximately east – west, suggesting they may be Christian, and may represent part of a cemetery associated with the middle and late Saxon settlement to the north.

2.15 Approximately 70m to the north, excavations at 33 Queen Street, revealed evidence for significant activity, which appears to range in date from the 9th century to the 13th century AD (Stirk, 2002). The main occupation on the site apparently consisted of a late Saxon defended enclosure. The defences appear to have later been dismantled, possibly in the 10th century at a time that *burhs*

(defended settlements) were being established at Hertford, Bedford and Ashwell. New buildings occupied the space left by the demolished defences.

2.16 The full extent of the Saxon settlement is currently unknown. No other boundaries were observed during the excavations at 33 Queen Street and no evidence of occupation was recorded during the evaluation at 40 Queen Street (Davis, 2001) or to the south-west during an evaluation by the Hertfordshire Archaeological Trust to the rear of 69 Queen Street (Vaughan, 1998).

2.17 It has been suggested that a settlement had been established in the early/ middle Saxon period, centred on the present High Street and Market Place, and to the west and north-west of the church (Burleigh & Stevenson, 1994). This may have been delimited on the northern side by a cemetery at the junction between Bancroft, Brand Street and High Street. A number of undated burials have been recovered from this area. Skeletons were uncovered in the late 19th century during works at Moss' Corner and on the site of the Trooper Inn (NHDC 447). Other remains have been discovered more recently. In 1987, during alterations at Lloyds Bank on the corner of Bancroft and High Street on the opposite side of the road to Moss' Corner, a truncated skeleton was discovered in the cellars. Further human bones were found next door, during renovation works at 2-3 Bancroft. Although no artefacts have been recovered to date these burials, they clearly pre-date the establishment of the medieval street layout (ibid. 12-14).

2.18 A late Saxon planned town has also been postulated, located to the north and west of the earlier settlement and established on a square town plan. It has been suggested that the line formed by modern Paynes Park and Grammar School Walk marks the western limit of this settlement (ibid.).

Medieval

2.19 The Domesday Book of 1086 records that Hitchin was held by the king (Morris, 1978). It answered for five hides of land (approximately 600 acres). Two of these hides (approximately 240 acres) were in the hands of the minster church. Ninety one males are recorded as living on the 3 hides (approximately 360 acres) of the king's land, comprising 41 villagers, 17 smallholders, 22 cottagers and 12 slaves. This gives an estimated total population of between 350 and 450. Eleven males are recorded on the two hides belonging to the church, giving an estimated total population of between 45 and 60. The total estimated population for the manor was therefore between 400 and 600. This is quite a high density and suggests that Hitchin was an established and thriving community by the 11th century. As a royal manor the town would have provided a focus for people in the surrounding countryside, and an outlet for their produce. Four mills, worth 53s 4d, are recorded on the manor. Port Mill, on the River Hiz, was almost certainly one of these. Meadowland, pastureland and woodland for 600 pigs, are also recorded.

2.20 A number of other manors are recorded as being attached to Hitchin, which gave its name to the half-hundred. These included land in Hexton, Offley and Charlton, all of which were held by the king. The manor continued to be held by the Crown until the 17th century. At various times it was granted to relatives or courtiers, but always reverted to Crown possession. William Rufus granted Hitchin to Guy de Balliol, whose family held it until 1295, when it was confiscated following the rebellion of John de

Balliol, king of Scots. The de Kendale family were granted the manor from 1311 until 1376, when the male line failed. It was then granted to Alice Perrers, the king's mistress. Richard II granted Hitchin to his uncle, Edmund of York, in 1387. It reverted to the Crown in 1460, following Richard of York's death at the Battle of Wakefield during the Wars of the Roses. The following year Richard's son was crowned Edward IV and he granted the manor to his mother, Cecily. Following her death in 1495, Henry VII gave Hitchin to his queen, Elizabeth of York, as part of her jointure. This set a precedent, and through the 16th and 17th centuries the manor formed part of the queen consort's jointure. After Catherine of Braganza's death in 1705, the manor was granted on a series of leases until 1843 when the last lease expired and the manor of Hitchin reverted to the Crown (Howlett, 2000).

2.21 Although there is no evidence from the Domesday Book that Hitchin was a borough in the 11th century, it had probably developed into one by the late 12th century, due to the prosperity of the wool trade (Hunns & Bryant, 2002, 3). By 1268 the documentary evidence suggests that burgesses were paying rent in the borough and that a distinction was made between the tenants of the manor and those of the borough (ibid. p.4). Merchants of the 'Staple of Calais' are recorded as resident in the town (ibid.) and the existence of a Woolstapler's Hall has been suggested. The wealth generated by the wool trade was demonstrated in the rebuilding of the parish church in 1305, following the collapse of the roof of the 12th century structure in 1304. The new building was embattled all round, one of the usual ways of expressing wealth and importance (Pevsner & Cherry, 1992, 197). A number of religious guilds existed in the town, and the survival of several of their guildhalls has been suggested, such as The Brotherhood on Bancroft and The Cooper's Arms on Tilehouse Street.

2.22 Two religious houses were established in the town. The Biggin, on the western side of Queen Street, is the site of a Gilbertine Priory founded 1361. The Priory, located on the Bridge Street/ Tilehouse Street junction, is the site of a Carmelite Friary founded in the early 14th century. Three local men, Adam le Rous, John de Blomville and John de Cobham, gave land and buildings in 1307 to establish a Carmelite Friary, dedicated to Our Alone Saviour and the Blessed Virgin Mary (Pollard & Gerish, 1905). By the mid 13th century the Rule of the Order was modified, allowing the hermits to become an Order of mendicant friars and to establish themselves in towns, and to live a communal life of preaching and studying. The Carmelites became known as the White Friars because they wore a white cloak and scapulary over their brown habit. They remained in Hitchin for over 200 years. During that time the Priory developed around the original grant of land. Later buildings included a cloister, a scriptorium and a solarium. The cloister, part of which still exists in the present structure, was built between 1420 and 1450 and incorporated a dormitory over the top.

2.23 The present town plan still shows the evidence of the medieval layout, which formed a T-shape, with the road from Bancroft as the stem and Tilehouse Street/ Bridge Street as the top. The Market Place was originally much larger, running from the southern end of Bancroft, along High Street and through Market Place and included the area now covered by Bucklersbury and Sun Street. The churchyard lay on the eastern side and may have been open to the Market Place (Burleigh & Stevenson, 1994, Figure 5). Gradually the market was infilled by blocks of buildings between present day Bucklersbury and Sun Street at the southern end, and High Street and Churchyard at the northern. These 'middle rows' probably represent the sites of permanent market stalls and are found in other

towns in northern Hertfordshire, for example Baldock and Stevenage. The encroachments may have started by the 13th century and there is evidence of continuous tenure by 1470 (Hunns & Bryant, 2000, 4). By the mid 16th century the Market Place had been reduced to the size it is today (Smith, 1992, 156).

2.24 The medieval town was concentrated around the market and the church, with other development along the Tilehouse Street/Bridge Street axis to the south and Dead Street (now Queen Street) to the east. Although a large number of medieval structures were demolished in the 20th century, including The Croft and The Hermitage along Bancroft, and along Queen Street in the 1920s, a number of buildings with medieval origins still survive in the town centre and on Tilehouse Street, including the parish church, The Biggin, The Cooper's Arms and The Priory.

2.25 Archaeological fieldwork has revealed evidence of medieval activity in the vicinity of the study area. Significant quantities of pottery waster sherds of 13th century date (HSMR 11447) were recovered from a pit by the roundabout at the junction of Tilehouse Street and Paynes Park in 1982, approximately 150m north-west of the study area (Turner-Rugg, 1993). They indicate the presence of a possible kiln site in the vicinity. A number of features and deposits of medieval date, including a soil layer, a posthole, a pit and a possible drainage gully were recorded during trial trenching at 35 Tilehouse Street (West, nd).

Post-medieval

2.26 The development of the town during the post-medieval period is shown in a series of maps, starting in the mid 17th century. The earliest has been dated to c.1650 (Burleigh & Stevenson, 1994, 17-18). Although it is unlikely to be completely accurate it does give an impression of the layout of the town at this period. Essentially the town plan remained the same as the postulated early medieval town layout (ibid. 15, figure 5). Buildings are shown on either side of Tilehouse Street, Bridge Street, Bucklersbury, Sun Street, High Street and north along Bancroft. The area to the east of the church is less developed, suggesting that the western side of the River Hiz was still the focus for activity.

2.27 Early 19th century maps show that, although the town had not grown greatly in size, it had become more congested. Previously open land on the eastern side of the river, directly opposite the church, was now developed. Property boundaries appear to have remained static in the medieval core.

2.28 The population of the town increased significantly during the 19th century. The 1801 census revealed there were 3,161 inhabitants, which had grown to 10,788 by 1901. The fastest increase was in the first half of the century: 7,077 people were recorded on the 1851 census (Foster, 1987, 2). This rapid increase in population was chiefly the result of problems in rural areas which forced agricultural labourers to seek work in the towns. Most of the influx was housed in the slum tenements that developed between the church and Windmill Hill. The Tilehouse Street area remained relatively untouched by such developments.

2.29 Brewing and malting were important in the town during the post-medieval period. Many of the maltings supplied the large London breweries, as well as the more local ones. The longest surviving

example was located on the corner of Charlton Road and Wratten Road (HSMR 5384) less than 100m south of the study area. This was originally built of brick and timber in the 16th/17th century. It may have been constructed around a courtyard, but by the 19th century only two ranges were left standing, one fronting Charlton Road, the other on Wratten Road. The Hitchin fire engine was housed there between 1851 and 1870. These maltings were demolished in 1970 (Fleck & Poole, 1999, 122-3). Bucklersbury Maltings were also close to the study area, located on the corner of Tilehouse Street and Bucklersbury, less than 100m to the east.

SITE SPECIFIC

2.30 The study area is located on the northern side of Tilehouse Street, opposite the Charlton Road. It has been suggested that Tilehouse Street lay within the area settled in the early and middle Saxon periods (Burleigh and Stevenson, 1994, Figure 3), but that it was outside the postulated planned late Saxon town (ibid. Figure 4). However, it lies within an area that was certainly developed by the 15th century. A number of medieval buildings have been identified in the immediate vicinity of the present site, including the Priory to the south-east and the Cooper's Arms to the north-west. The street seems to have formed the south-western boundary to the town from at least the medieval period.

2.31 The first documentary reference to the name Tilehouse Street is in the Court of Rolls of 1460, when it appeared as *Tylehousestret* (Douglas & Humphries, 1995, 48). It is possible that tile and pottery manufacture in the vicinity started earlier, since *John le Tilere* is recorded in the Lay Subsidy Roll of 1323 (Burleigh & Stevenson, 1994, 18).

2.32 Maps dated to the 17th and 19th centuries show that the study area was the only open space along the street frontage on the northern side of Tilehouse Street (see Figures 2 - 9). During the post-medieval period the rear boundaries to properties fronting the street changed very little, suggesting that the medieval boundaries continued to be respected. The Bridge Street/Tilehouse Street axis had almost certainly been well established by the early 14th century.

2.33 A number of listed buildings are located in the immediate vicinity of the study area (DoE). Several of these originally date to the medieval period. The Cooper's Arms, no.81-82 Tilehouse Street, lies to the west and has been listed as Grade II*. This was once thought to be the Tyler's Guildhall, although this theory has now largely been discredited. Number 81 appears to have been originally built of stone in the mid 15th century, possibly on a courtyard plan, but was largely altered in the 18th and 19th century. Number 82 appears to date to the 17th century, but may be earlier (DoE). A covered carriageway leads to a rear yard, used as a car park. Archaeological observation on groundworks in the car park in 1983 revealed considerable evidence for post-medieval activity. This included the remains of a paved and cobbled surface, a building or demolition horizon of probable pre-18th century date and a mortar bonded brick wall (HSMR 6483).

2.34 Numbers 83 and 84 are immediately adjacent to the study area on the western side. They have been listed as Grade II and both have been dated to the 18th century (DoE). As the mid 17th map shows a large two-storey building on the site, they may either incorporate this earlier structure or have replaced it.

2.35 The cottages immediately adjacent on the eastern side have not been listed. They may date to the late 17th or 18th century. A small building is shown on the street frontage to the east of the study area on the mid 17th century map, but it does not appear to have a rear range. Although not marked on the earliest map, the cottages were certainly in existence by the early 19th century, as they appear on the map of 1818. It appears that these cottages were incorporated with Hall's Yard and numbers 85 and 86 Tilehouse Street. A series of deeds relating to these properties give details of owners and occupiers between 1691 and 1920 (HALS D/EX 507/T1/1-34). The earliest indenture, dated 1st April, 1691, refers to a sale of property on Tilehouse Street between William Hawkins of Hertford and Benjamin Draper of Hitchin. Number 85 has been listed as Grade II on account of its rear portion, which has been dated to the 17th century.

2.36 The present site was occupied between at least the 1960s and the present by S.Thompson, Builders and Contractors.

Cartographic

2.37 The earliest known map of Hitchin has been dated to the mid 17th century (ibid. 17-18). This shows a line of buildings running along the street frontage on the northern side (see Figure 2). The present site appears to be marked as a boundary wall only, running between a large building to the west and a smaller structure to the east. Open land is shown to the rear of the wall and the buildings.

2.38 Drapentier's map of c.1690 is less clear (see Figure 3). Possibly this was a result of perspective since it appears to have been drawn from Windmill Hill, to the north-east of the study area. This shows considerable infilling in the angle between the northern side of Tilehouse Street and the western side of Bucklersbury. Two possible chimneys are shown in this area. Possibly these mark the sites of tile or pottery kilns. The study area is not clearly visible, but is likely to have remained as open land or garden.

2.39 There are no known 18th century maps of the town. The earliest 19th century map dates to 1818 and shows the study area as undeveloped land, the only parcel of undeveloped land on the street frontage (see Figure 4). A boundary wall, with an entrance, is marked, which forms the southern boundary and divides the property from the street. A row of cottages is shown along the eastern boundary. The northern and western sides are defined partly by buildings and partly by rear gardens. The property is numbered 293 on the map and an accompanying schedule reveals that it was described as a garden, owned by Robert Newton and occupied by Isaac Newton, and measuring 18 perches. The garden does not seem to belong to any of the surrounding properties; neither Robert nor Isaac Newton are recorded as owning other property in the immediate vicinity. A second edition of this map was published in 1820 (see Figure 5).

2.40 The Hitchin Tithe Map, surveyed by J. Bailey Denton and dated 1844, shows that the site remained undeveloped at this time (see Figure 6). It was numbered 256 on the plan, and the accompanying schedule shows that it was owned by Isaac Newton and occupied by an individual called Smith. The garden is again recorded as measuring 18 perches.

2.41 The large scale Board of Health and Ordnance Survey maps of 1851 and 1886 show the town in great detail (see Figures 7 & 8). There was no change to the layout or boundaries of the study area between the 1850s and the 1880s. It appears that the land was all on one level, no flights of steps are shown. Flowerbeds appear to have been located along the northern, southern and western edges, and in the centre of the plot. The central area appears to have been laid to lawn, with some shrubs or trees. A small structure, possibly a summerhouse, is marked in the angle of the northern and eastern boundaries. The plot was apparently defined by a brick wall on the northern, western and southern sides and by the row of cottages and another small garden on the eastern side. The name Hall's Yard for the land to the east, first appears in 1851.

2.42 Later editions of the Ordnance Survey maps show that the boundaries and layout of the study area and the surrounding properties remained the same between at least the early 19th century and the 1920s (See Figures 9 & 10). Between 1923 and 1966 two small buildings were erected on the study area, one in the north-eastern corner and one halfway along the western boundary (see Figure 11). These probably reflect the site's use as a builder's yard at this time. In the same period the yard was apparently extended in the north-western corner to take in the small plot beyond the row of cottages.

3. Assessment of Risk

Prehistoric

3.1 The number of finds of prehistoric implements, from the Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age, from Hitchin suggests that the area of the modern town may have attracted activity during the prehistoric periods. The concentration of finds on the higher ground to the north-east may indicate that this is the most likely location for prehistoric settlement. Alternatively, it has been the area most investigated, having been disturbed by large scale quarrying in the 19th century, a period of considerable antiquarian interest.

3.2 Limited evidence for early prehistoric activity has been recorded from the immediate vicinity of the study area. Flint implements of Palaeolithic date have been found on Wratten Road, approximately 300m west of the study area (HSMR 288).

3.3 Evidence for a possible settlement, and associated field system, of late prehistoric date was recorded approximately 120m to the north in January 2004. Archaeological evaluation on land to the rear of Paynes Park revealed a number of features dating to the late Neolithic/early Bronze Age (Butler, 2004). The cartographic evidence suggests that, like the study area, this site had remained undeveloped since at least the early post-medieval period. Other evidence of late prehistoric activity in the vicinity includes the recovery of flint implements, of Mesolithic and late Neolithic/early Bronze Age date, as residual finds within a later soil horizon during archaeological investigations at 35 Tilehouse Street, approximately 110m to the north-west. The remains of two ploughed-out ring barrows have also been located in Priory Park, approximately 500m to the south (HSMR 7417 and 7418).

3.4 On this basis, the risk of encountering features and finds of early prehistoric date in the course of development on the present site may be considered to be *Moderate*. However, the risk of encountering features and finds of late prehistoric date, particularly relating to the Neolithic/ Bronze Age transition, may be considered to be *High*.

3.5 The regional research framework has identified the development of farming, and the integration of settlements and their associated fields during the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods as an important research topic (Brown & Murphy, 2000, 10 – 12). Until very recently no sites of this type and period were known from within the town centre. Therefore, the significance of any potential remains of prehistoric date on the present site, similar to those recorded during the evaluation at Paynes Park, should be considered to be *High*.

Iron Age

3.6 Very little evidence for the Iron Age has been recovered from the immediate vicinity of the study area. Slight remains dating to this period were revealed during excavations at the top of Portmill Lane, approximately 450m to the north-east (HSMR 6455). The recent archaeological fieldwork to the rear of Paynes Park did not apparently discover remains of this period (Butler, 2004) nor were features and finds encountered during the series of investigations in the town centre (Aitken, 2003).

3.7 On this basis, the risk of encountering features and finds of Iron Age date on the present site may be considered to be *Low*.

3.8 A number of research topics have been highlighted for the Iron Age in the regional research framework (Bryant, 2000, 16-17). These include the development of farming and settlement chronology. There is a dearth of Iron Age sites in the town, although archaeological evidence from other parts of the district shows that this area was well settled by this period. Therefore, the significance of any potential remains of this period on the present site should be considered to be *High*.

Romano-British

3.9 The accumulated evidence suggests that Roman occupation in Hitchin consisted of a developed rural landscape, comprising a series of villas and farmsteads lying close to rivers and springs (G.Burleigh, pers. comm.).

3.10 A number of chance finds and sites have been identified in the vicinity of the study area, including the occupation site and associated cemetery at Foxholes, approximately 1km to the west (HSMR 1184). Further cremation burials, with accompanying pottery vessels, were discovered on Taylors Hill, approximately 400m to the south-east (HSMR 1201). Features and finds of late Roman date were also recorded during the excavations at 33 Queen Street (Stirk, 2002) and during the recent evaluations in the Portmill Lane car parks in the town centre (Aitken, 2003). A group of coins and metalwork were found in Priory Park, approximately 700m south of the study area, by a metal detectorist (HSMR 1175). A small assemblage of Roman pottery and building material was also recovered during archaeological evaluation at 35 Tilehouse Street, approximately 110m to the north-west. Although this material was residual in later features, it may indicate activity of Roman date in the vicinity.

3.11 On this basis, the risk of encountering features and finds of Roman date on the present site may be considered to be *Moderate*.

3.12 Hitchin is thought to have lain in a rural, rather than an urban, landscape in the Roman period. A number of relevant topics, including the investigation of small rural settlements such as farmsteads and relationship between town and country in the landscape, have been identified in the regional research framework (Going & Plouviez, 2000, 21 – 22). Despite the recent extensive work in the town centre, relatively little evidence of Roman occupation has been so far recorded in Hitchin. As the present site lies between the known occupation site at Foxholes and the possible riverside settlement in the modern town centre, the significance of any potential remains of this period on the present site should be considered to be *High*.

Anglo-Saxon

3.13 The documentary and archaeological evidence suggests that Hitchin was important during the Saxon period. It was a Mercian royal estate from at least the 8th century, which appears to have continued as a royal possession into the 10th century. Evidence from archaeological fieldwork along Queen Street, approximately 350m to the north-east, indicates that a substantial high status settlement

was established on the eastern bank of the River Hiz, possibly representing part of the royal manor (Stirk, 2002).

3.14 Chance finds of high status artefacts have also been recorded from the town. Two early Saxon brooches were discovered in Priory Park, between 625m and 800m south of the study area (HSMR 2298 and 6535). A decorated bronze pin, of 8th or 9th century date, was found on the site of St Andrew's School, approximately 250m to the north-east (HSMR 1612). A silver *sceatta* (NHDC 1470) and a 9th century coin hoard (NHDC 441) have also been discovered within a kilometre of the present site.

3.15 The study area is located within the possible early Saxon settlement, which may have been established at the junction of regional and local roads (Burleigh & Stevenson, 12, Figure 3). It appears to lie outside the postulated late Saxon planned town, the southern boundary of which has been suggested as running along present day Brand Street (*ibid.*, Figure 4). It is possible that the present site was located either in adjoining fields, or even formed part of extra-mural development as the town spread southwards. Sherds of Saxo-Norman pottery were collected during the archaeological evaluation at 35 Tilehouse Street (West, nd).

3.16 On this basis, the risk of encountering features or finds of Anglo-Saxon date on the present site may be considered to be *Moderate to High*.

3.17 Chance finds of high status artefacts from the vicinity of the study area, and recent archaeological excavations in the town centre, have demonstrated that Hitchin was clearly an important settlement by at least the 8th century AD. A number of relevant research topics have been highlighted in the regional research framework, including the relationship of royal *vills* to later urban centres and the examination of settlement morphology (Ayers, 2000, 29-31). As the present site is thought possibly to lie within the area of an early Saxon settlement, and to the south of a later planned town, the significance of any potential remains of this period on the site should be considered to be *High*.

Medieval

3.18 The line of Tilehouse Street was almost certainly established by the early 14th century, and possibly earlier. The origin of a number of buildings in the immediate vicinity of the study area can be dated to the medieval period, including numbers 81-2 (The Cooper's Arms) and number 84.

3.19 The street name is first recorded in 1460 and suggests that it was the centre of a local tile and pottery manufacturing industry by the mid 15th century. Evidence for medieval pottery manufacture was recovered from the area of the junction with Paynes Park. A pit containing greyware waster sherds of probable 13th century date was recorded in 1982 (Turner-Rugg, 1993). A medieval soil horizon and a number of features of this period were identified during the archaeological evaluations at 35 Tilehouse Street (West, nd), immediately to the east of the area where the pottery wasters were discovered.

3.20 On this basis the risk of encountering features and finds of medieval date on the present site may be considered to be *High*.

3.21 The line of Tilehouse Street is known to have been established by at least the early 14th century. Its name suggests that it was an industrial area, concerned with the manufacture of tiles and pottery. A number of relevant research topics have been highlighted by the regional research framework, including the study of settlement morphology; the definition of boundaries in relation to urban settlement; evidence for commercial and industrial activity (Ayers, 2000, 29-31). As Tilehouse Street both marked the southern boundary to the medieval town and lay in an area of industrial activity, the significance of any potential remains of this period on the site should be considered to be *High*.

Post-medieval

3.22 Cartographic evidence has shown that the present site has remained undeveloped since at least the mid 17th century. The Schedule attached to the map of 1818, and the Tithe Award of 1844, both describe the plot as a garden, and give its measurement as 18 perches. However, the listed owners and tenants of the property do not appear to have occupied any of the immediately adjacent properties. The Board of Health and Ordnance Survey maps of 1851 and 1886 show the garden features, including paths and flowerbeds.

3.23 Evidence for a possible post-medieval kiln and associated chalk floor surfaces was recovered during the archaeological evaluation at 35 Tilehouse Street (West, nd). This site was immediately east of the area where a pit containing medieval pottery wasters was recorded. It is a further indication that the identification of the street with the manufacture of tile and pottery is correct. Possible kiln chimneys have also been identified on the map of c.1650, at the eastern end of Tilehouse Street (Burleigh & Stevenson, 1994, 18).

3.24 On this basis, the risk of encountering finds and features, including 19th century garden features, of post-medieval date may be considered to be *High*.

3.25 Cartographic evidence has demonstrated that the present site has remained undisturbed since at least the late 17th century. During the 19th century it was laid out as a garden, with paths, lawns and flowerbeds. These are clearly shown on the Board of Health and Ordnance Survey maps (see Figures 7 & 8). The study of 'vernacular gardens', that is the study of small household gardens rather than the large parks and estates of the aristocracy, has been highlighted as a research topic in the regional research framework (Gilman et al, 2000, 39). Evidence for changes in the design of the garden could be identified during any fieldwork on the present site and therefore the significance of any potential remains of this period on the site is considered to be *High*.

Modern

3.26 Cartographic evidence shows that the site altered very little during the 20th century. The OS map of 1966 shows two small buildings, one in the north-western angle, the other part way along the eastern boundary. These may have been used as offices or storage associated with the site's use as a builders yard and they may have had services to them. Doubtless tarmac or concrete surfaces were laid across the yard, which may have required some groundworks.

3.27 On this basis, the risk of encountering finds and features of modern date may be considered to be *High*.

3.28 During the later 20th century the present site was used as a builders yard. A number of changes were made to the property as a result of this use, including the construction of two small structures, with probable associated service trenches, and the surfacing of the yard. No relevant research topics have been highlighted in the regional research framework and therefore the significance of any potential remains of this period on the site is considered to be *Low*.

CONCLUSION

3.29 The map evidence shows that the study area has remained largely undeveloped since at least the mid 17th century, and is likely to have remained so since the late medieval period. There is no apparent reason why this should have been the case. Recent excavations on similarly undeveloped property to the rear of Paynes Park, north of the present site, have revealed the survival of late prehistoric remains, as well as medieval and post-medieval features (Butler, 2004). Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon finds have also been recovered from the vicinity.

3.30 There is a high probability that archaeological remains, of potential significance when considered in the context of the established research agenda for the region, are preserved on the site, and would be damaged, destroyed or otherwise affected by its development. The actual nature of such remains can only be characterised by intrusive investigation. It is likely that such an investigation would form an element in the requirements of the planning authority relating to the proposed development of the site, either before the determination of a planning application, or as a condition on consent being granted.

4. Sources Consulted

ARCHIVES

Hertfordshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (HSMR)

Hitchin Museum

Map of Hitchin, 1818

Tithe Map and Schedule, 1844

OS Board of Health Plan of the Township of Hitchin, 1851, scale 10 feet to 1 mile

OS Board of Health Plan of the Township of Hitchin, 1886, scale 10 feet to 1 mile

Photographic archives

Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies (HALS)

OS 1881, Hertfordshire Sheet XII.I, 1st Edition, 1881, 25" scale

OS 1898, Hertfordshire Sheet XII.I, 2nd Edition, 1898, 25" scale

OS 1923, Hertfordshire Sheet XII.I, 3rd Edition, 25" scale

OS 1966, Sheet TL 1828/ 1928, 1966, 1:2500 scale

D/EX 507/ T1 Deeds regarding 85 – 86 Tilehouse Street, Hall's Yard, 3 cottages adjacent and land, 1691 - 1920

INDIVIDUALS

G.R. Burleigh, former Keeper of Field Archaeology, North Herts Museums Service

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5. Illustrations

Figure 1	Site location
Figure 2	Map of Hitchin, 1650
Figure 3	Map of Hitchin, 1690
Figure 4	Tracing from Map of Hitchin, 1818
Figure 5	Map of Hitchin, 1820
Figure 6	Tracing from Map of Hitchin, 1844
Figure 7	Tracing from Map of Hitchin, 1851
Figure 8	Ordnance Survey, 1886
Figure 9	Ordnance Survey, 1898
Figure 10	Ordnance Survey, 1923
Figure 11	Ordnance Survey, 1966

Appendix 1

Extract from Hertfordshire Sites and Monuments Record

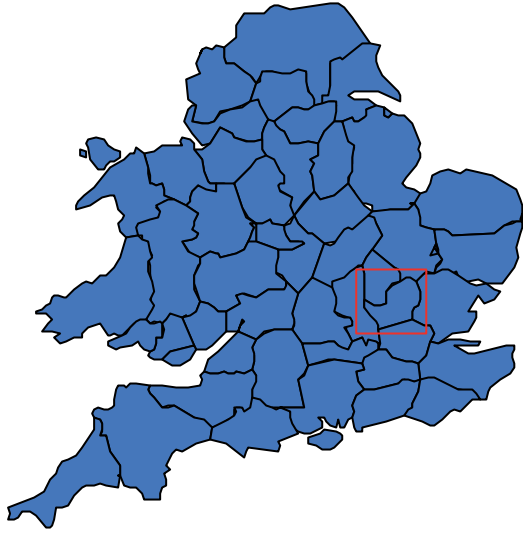
HSMR	NGR	Period	Remarks
13	TL 185 291	Medieval	Hitchin was a Medieval borough by 1268 when it was recorded as a 'borough farmed for 8 1/2 marks'. The reference suggests that Hitchin Had achieved a degree of status and independence by the late 13th century unmatched by most of the other medieval boroughs of the county. The town still retains most of its medieval topography and many fine late medieval and post medieval and post medieval houses. (See also 0064, 0065 and 0066).
64	TL 1842 2896	Post Medieval	Conservative Club, 5 Sun Street. Town house built in dark red brick with 2 storeys.
65	TL 1849 2935	Post Medieval	21A Bancroft. Late C18th town house of 3 storeys in deep red brick forming part of a group of town houses from nos 21 to 28. Wooden porch carved in classical design.
66	TL 1851 2941	Post Medieval	Manor House Galleries, 26-7 Bancroft. Fine town house of c1700
279	TL 19 29	Palaeolithic	Palaeolithic flint implements, listed as: 2 Acheulian hand axes, a twisted ovate, 2 hand axes, 10 scrapers, 5 flint axes, 5 flint implement. Probably forms part of series of implements found at Hitchin c1880-1900.?Folly Pit
280	TL 193 288	Palaeolithic	Palaeolithic flint implements from Highbury Pit, listed as: 4 Acheulian hand axes, 2 hand axes, 29 flint scrapers & 6 flint implements
281	TL 1760 2905	Palaeolithic Neolithic	Palaeolithic implement and Neolithic scrapers, found in a field near High View.
283	TL 189 288	Palaeolithic	10 Palaeolithic flint axes found at Highbury, Hitchin and located at Verulamium museum.
284	TL 19 29	Palaeolithic	Palaeolithic implements comprising: 8 axes, implement, 7 trimmed flakes, 2 arrowheads, 80 flint implements. Found by W. Ransom. Probably forms part of series of implements found at Hitchin c1880-1900.
290	TL 181 289	Neolithic	Neolithic flint implements consisting of a knife, 6 polished flint axes, a scraper and a chipped flint gouge.
294	TL 1914 2903	Neolithic	A Neolithic black flint axe, roughly shaped, was found in the garden of 'Crofton', The Avenue, Hitchin. Hitchin Museum
298	TL 19 29	Neolithic	Neolithic flint axe found at Highbury Avenue.
303	TL 192 292	Bronze Age	A Bronze Age axe was found when digging the foundations for a house about 300 yds from W Ransom's home, Fairfield, in 1896.
307	TL 194 294	Bronze Age	Bronze Age axe and 4 flints from Benslow
310	TL 193 293	Neolithic Bronze Age	The OS record states that a Neolithic flint fabricator was found at Fairfield in 1885. The Morris Gazetteer dates the flint to the Bronze Age.
1175	TL 1845 2834	Roman	Roman coins and bronze objects were found in Priory Park with the aid of a metal detector in 1977. The coins are a bronze of Helena, 324-28; third brass of Valentinian I, 367-75 and a bronze of Vespasian, AD75. The bronze objects are listed as; ?toilet instrument, ?Jews harp, ?buckle, buckles (2), brooches (3), hooks (2), cuirass fastening fragment, rosette boss, charmbell, fan shaped ornament, ornament with screw and a ring shaped object.

HSMR	NGR	Period	Remarks
1182	TL 19 29	Palaeolithic	Acheulian hand axes: Middle or Upper Acheulian with Clactonian influence. Probably forms part of series of implements found at Hitchin c1880-1900.
1183	TL 189 284	Palaeolithic	Implements of the early upper Acheulian period were discovered between 1880 and 1900 in Ransoms brickfield and Jeeves brickyard at Folly Path, Highbury. Finds include numerous Hoxne type hand axes, a few cordate and ovate hand axes, several cleavers and a number of flake tools of High Lodge type. (Probably includes 0279, 0284, 1182).
1200	TL 18 29	Roman	Roman glass vessels at Bancroft, Hitchin.
1201	TL 186 287	Roman	A Roman cinerary urn with cremation was found at Taylor's Hill. A similar urn was discovered on adjoining land.
1203	TL 18 29	Roman	Half a Romano-British quern from Bancroft,
1212	TL 194 285	Roman	A Roman jug (150-200 AD) and a samian dish (150 AD) were found near Whitehill Close, Hitchin.
1214	TL 184 292	Early Medieval	During building operations workmen found a well about 25 feet deep at the back of Wendy's Hat shop in Churchyard, Hitchin. Lined with a soft, chalky stone, the well was filled with about 15 feet of water. .
1215	TL 193 293	Prehistoric	Many pieces of ancient British pottery and urns containing cremated bones were found round the residence of Mr W Ransom, at Fairfield, Hitchin, in the late 19 th century.
1415	TL 1870 291	Roman	A small Roman pot of the 3rd or 4th century found at St Andrew's Hill, Hitchin.
1418	TL 1903 2923	Roman	Roman pottery or evidence of occupation, Highbury Road
1419	TL 1833 2917	Roman	Pottery and other evidence of occupation.
1420	TL 1845 2940	Roman	Pottery and other evidence of occupation, SE of Grammar School
1426	TL 1885 2845	Roman	A Roman kiln was found beneath an accumulation of rubbish in an old brickfield on Hitchin Hill, on the Stevenage Road. Listed by Swan as possible Roman kiln site.
1609	TL 179 294	Early Medieval	A small Anglo-Saxon pot was found in a garden in Gaping Lane.
1610	TL 194 295	Early Medieval	Benslow is Benchelow Pece in 1556 (temp Ed VI Chantry, 1556 AOMB). This has been interpreted as the site of an Anglo-Saxon burial mound. Nothing visible in the area, which is now a housing estate.
1612	TL 1875 2904	Early Medieval Middle Saxon	An 8th or 9th century Saxon pin, 3 inches long, was found at St Andrew's Hall. It is now in Hitchin museum
1613	TL 1885 2900	Early Medieval	A broad, leaf shaped implement of silvered iron, found with fishing spear (see 2301)
2280	TL 185 287	Post Medieval	Icehouse serving The Priory, described as still almost intact, due to its remote situation and to the fact that the house has only recently passed out of private hands. It is a small structure, without the top ice-chute and marks on the brick surrounds show clearly where wagons have bumped into the piers as they were brought in laden with ice. All intermediate woodwork has gone.
2298	TL 1838 2817	Early Medieval	Part of silvered bronze 'long' brooch in form of a horses head, dated to the late 5 th century; found in plough soil, Priory Park, Jan/Feb 1981 with aid of metal detector.
2301	TL 1885 2900	Early Medieval	Barbed (fishing?) spear found with silvered iron implement (see 1613).

HSMR	NGR	Period	Remarks
2619	TL 185 292	Medieval	Although 15th century timber framed buildings were on the site until the 1960s, all traces were removed at that time, apart from several post medieval cellars. Observation carried out in April 1986 identified a 14th-15th century garden soil over the whole site.; the site was open land during this period, and built on in the later 15th century.
4389	TL 1855 2900	Medieval	Site of the Gilbertine priory, founded in 1361-2 by Sir Edward de Kendale and dissolved in 1538. The Biggin Almshouses, largely timber framed, date from the early 17th century. They are arranged around a narrow irregular courtyard which has a Tuscan colonnade on one side. JT Smith suggests they may possibly incorporate medieval timber framed buildings on a cloister plan.
4390	TL 1851 2911	Early Medieval Medieval	The Church of St Mary, Hitchin was built in the 12th century. Little remains of the original church, the present building being mainly of the 14th, 15th, 17th and 19th centuries. There are some Roman bricks in the tower. The interior retains carved woodwork of the 14th and 15th centuries, fine tombs and wall monuments. A Latten figure, possibly 13th century and probably representing the Virgin Mary was found during repair work to the porch. The church of Hitchin is described in the 10th and 11th centuries as a minister.
4392	TL 1839 2880	Medieval Post Medieval	Large country house incorporating details of earlier priory buildings of the 15th century. The best known element of the house is the southern section which was completely rebuilt c1775 in the Adam style. The Carmelite Friary of St Mary was founded in 1317 and dissolved in 1538. OS states that the only visible remains of the priory form part of the North and West range of the cloisters
4605	TL 1855 2964	Roman	The length of the Viatores road 210 through Hitchin from TL 1868 2769 to TL 1833 3133, just south of the Icknield Way (for the whole road see 4600). Not been confirmed by excavation.
4721	TL 18 29	Unknown	Skeletons found on Five Barrow Hill between Hitchin and Pirton.
4862	TL 1903 2923	Roman	Roman pottery or evidence of occupation, The Avenue
4863	TL 1885 2916	Roman	Roman pottery or evidence of occupation, Windmill Hill
4864	TL 1853 2941	Roman	Roman pottery or evidence of occupation, Bancroft
4869	TL 189 290	Early Medieval Medieval	A Saxon spear or Medieval trowel found in gravel pits, South of Hollow Lane,
4874	TL 1928 2905	Prehistoric	An arrowhead and 4 microliths found at a house called 'The Chiltern', Chiltern Road Hitchin.
4901	TL 180 287	Roman Early Medieval	A gold ring was discovered with the aid of a metal detector in a rose bed at Hawthorne Close. The ring, made of Jasper quartz depicts Mars with a spear and shield and dates to the 2nd or 3rd century; The setting is however probably Saxon.
5290	TL 180 294	Post Medieval	Postal wall box located in shop wall, Oughtonhead Way.
5333	TL 183 289	Post Medieval	Crossley single cylinder horizontal gas engine built 1890 with hot fuel ignition and ten fly wheels 5 ft in diameter. At the time of recording (1966) the engine was 'in daily use..."many years" since serviced'. Tilehouse Street

HSMR	NGR	Period	Remarks
5384	TL 182 288	Post Medieval	Originally a rectangular group of buildings with entrances at diagonal corners but at the time of recording (1965) only a L-shaped building along 2 road sides remained. Building on Charlton Road: Approx 130ft by 30 ft, roadside wall mostly 19th century brick with roof timbers of early date and tiled roof. Building on Wratten Road: approx 55ft by 20 ft, wall base containing some 16th/17th century brick. Possibly but not certainly identifiable on Drapentier's map 1700. Housed Hitchin fire engine c1851-70. Demolished 1970.
5713	TL 1860 2940	Post Medieval	Ransom's Herb Distillery, Bancroft. Premises consisted of a group of older buildings, part being still in use after a fire c1960 which destroyed the rest. The entrance from Bancroft is through the archway of a 17th century house. Buildings in good condition & still used by Ransom and Co. as a distillery.
5989	TL 189 291	Post Medieval	Site of a post mill which first appeared on Seller's map of 1676. It comprised a roundhouse and 4 sails. Burnt down in 1875 and nothing is left to be seen, the site is now a park.
6454	TL 19 29	Mesolithic	Mesolithic flint flake and graver found at Benslow, Hitchin (Benslow lodge TL 194 294).
6455	TL 186 291	Earlier Iron Age	Excavation in advance of redevelopment by G Burleigh for N Herts museum in Portmill Lane revealed slight evidence for Iron Age occupation. The excavation also produced evidence of Roman (see 6474) and Post Medieval (see 6456) occupation.
6456	TL 186 291	Post Medieval	Excavation in advance of redevelopment by G Burleigh for N Herts museum revealed a series of cobbled yards and timber framed buildings fronting medieval Portmill Lane. Most of the yard surfaces and structural remains dated to the 17th and 18th centuries. An 18th century well, 3 clay lined pits associated with the preparation of cattle horn cores and a large number of copper alloy pins of uncertain function were also revealed. The excavation also produced Roman (see 6474) and Iron Age material (6455).
6474	TL 186 291	Roman	Excavation in advance of redevelopment by G Burleigh for N Herts museum recovered Roman pottery and coins from residual contexts. The excavations also revealed slight evidence for Iron Age occupation (see 6455) and Post Medieval structural remains (see 6456).
6483	TL 1829 2902	Post Medieval	Observations carried out by M Daniels and G Burleigh during machine stripping of site of a proposed car park to rear of Cooper's Arms public house revealed a substantial amount of 19th-20th century building debris, remains of a paved and cobbled surface, a building/demolition horizon probably earlier than the 18th century and a mortar bonded garden/boundary wall. No pre-18th century material was recovered
6535	TL 1823 2834	Early Medieval	Gilded bronze 'button' brooch. Late 5th/early 6th century found 1981 with metal detector in ploughsoil, Priory Park.
6914	TL 1818 2842	Modern	A spigot mortar base standing in a field on the grounds of Priory Park, which was used in WWII as a base for 3 or 4 platoons of the home guard.
7417	TL 1837 2847	Neolithic Earlier Bronze Age	Cropmark of ring ditch, in Priory Park, Hitchin, approximately centred on above NGR. Alternatively it may possibly be a landscape feature. Another ring ditch or landscape feature lies c. 150m to the N (see 7418).
7418	TL 1837 2552	Neolithic Earlier Bronze Age	Crop mark of a ring ditch in Priory Park, Hitchin, centred approximately on the above NGR. It may alternatively possibly be a landscape feature. Another ring ditch or landscape feature lies c. 150m to the S (see 7417).
9969	TL 1831 2829	Medieval	The earliest reference to the deer park at Maydencroft is in 1320. Area now covered by Priory Park

HSMR	NGR	Period	Remarks
10413	TL 1845 2886	Post Medieval	Red brick bridge with stone coping, one arch, over the River Hiz on Bridge Street. Built in 1784. Arch original, and one parapet. In July 2000 a structural recording was undertaken of the bridge and in Autumn 2001 a watching brief was performed during repairs and alterations to the structure. The lower part of the bridge was exposed and was found to be resting on short timber piles set in a foundation trench which was apparently backfilled with cinders. Other timbers were found in the silt including 2 large planks, although these probably date to construction work in the 1960s which was subsequently abandoned.
10781	TL 1817 2903	Post Medieval	Western House, 35 Tilehouse Street. Street name derives from the pottery and tile manufacturing industry recorded in the area since the 15th century. Western House was the home of 17th C poet, playwright & translator, George Chapman (1559-1634). The house is grade 2 listed building, rebuilt or renovated in the late 18th C, it was built of brick, with 2 storeys below moulded brick cornice, parapet and steep tiled roof.
10876	TL 1823 2875	Post Medieval	Observation and recording of foundation trenches, drainage trenches and storm drains associated with the construction of Building 2 at Hitchin Priory. Observation of the drainage trenches revealed some evidence of water logging adjacent to the river, and 2 sherds of residual Romano-British pottery were recovered from the spoil heap next to trench 2. Observation of the foundation trenches for building 2 revealed a capped, brick lined, Post Medieval well at c. TL 18218 28763 and the remains of a brick and flint wall c. 11m to the east of the well. Approximately 5m of the wall survived, and small areas of a rammed chalk surface butted against it on its West side. The layer was also observed to the West of the wall, and may be the remains of an internal floor, possibly of a barn or out building. Several short lengths of brick walling to the south and south east of F3 appeared to form part of the footprint of later building, of post medieval date. The buildings may have been outbuildings or barns associated with the Carmelite Priory. Neither building is shown on 19th or 20th century maps. Finds included several sherds of 12th-15th century pottery, and also post medieval pottery and tile.
10879	TL 186 294	Medieval Post Medieval	Bancroft lies outside the core of the Medieval town of Hitchin, and represents later Medieval ribbon development northward from its Medieval core. parallel to the River Hiz. See also 10883.
11190	TL 185 291	Early Medieval	The late Saxon manor of Hitchin is mentioned in Domesday book. It's probable location was close to St Mary's church which is also mentioned in Domesday and in a 10th century will. However, any late Saxon manorial site, if it existed, was either moved or destroyed when the borough was established in the 13th century. The Domesday entry also mentions that St Mary's church held 2 of the 5 hides of the manor. It is therefore possible that a late Saxon rectory Manor was also present at Hitchin.
0	TL 1810 2900	Medieval	A pit containing 'wasters' of Hertfordshire grey ware Medieval pottery was found during excavation in advance of the A602 Hitchin bypass in 1982. Find indicates the site of a pottery kiln nearby. Material includes a few sherds with traces of glaze.

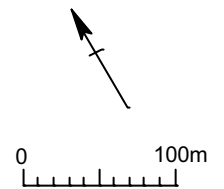


Site Location

Scale 1:1250

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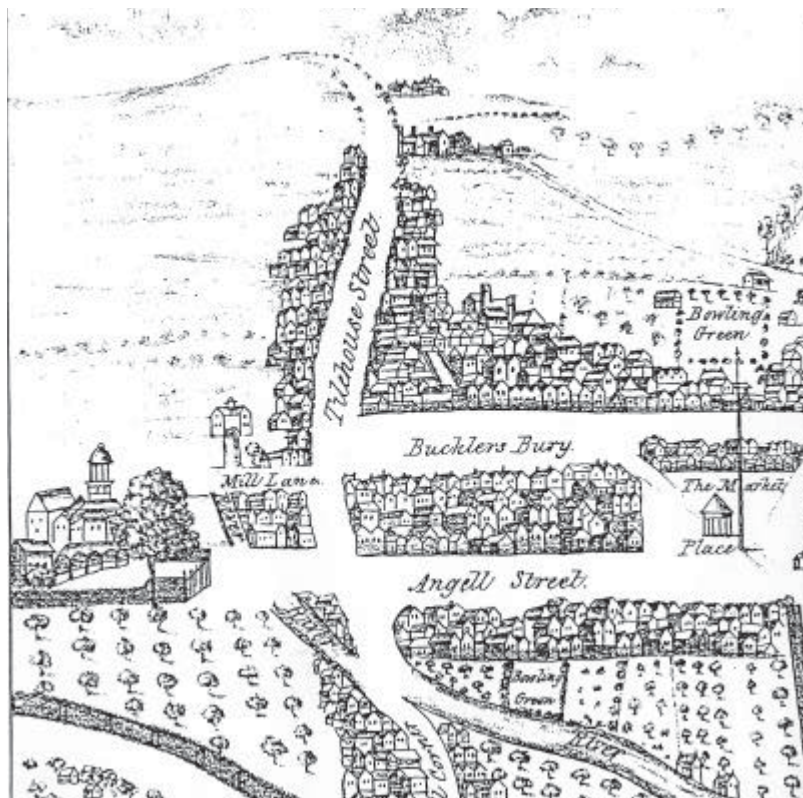
Figure 1



Map of Hitchin, 1650

Scale 1:5000

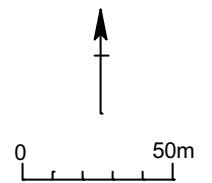
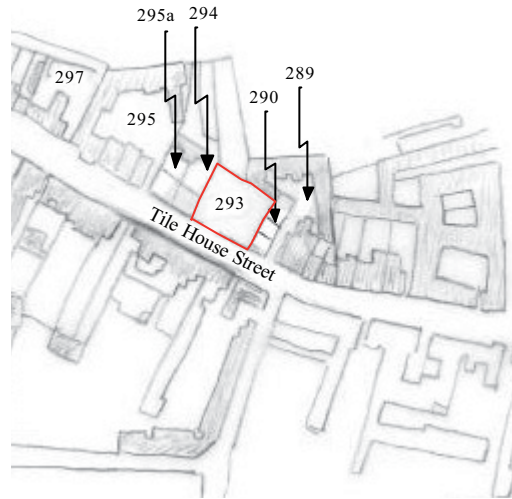
Figure 2



Map of Hitchin, 1690

Not to scale

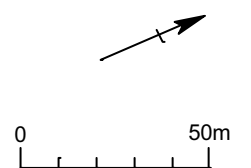
Figure 3



Tracing from Map of Hitchin, 1818

Scale 1:2500

Figure 4



Map of Hitchin, 1820

1:2000

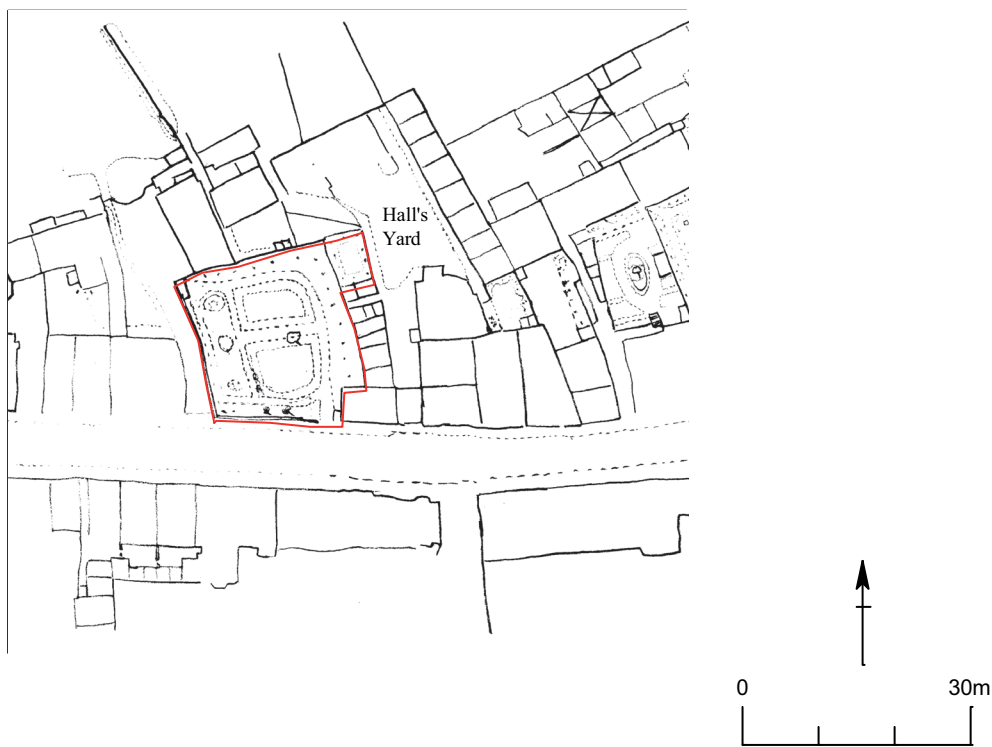
Figure 5



Tracing from Map of Hitchin, 1844

Scale 1:1500

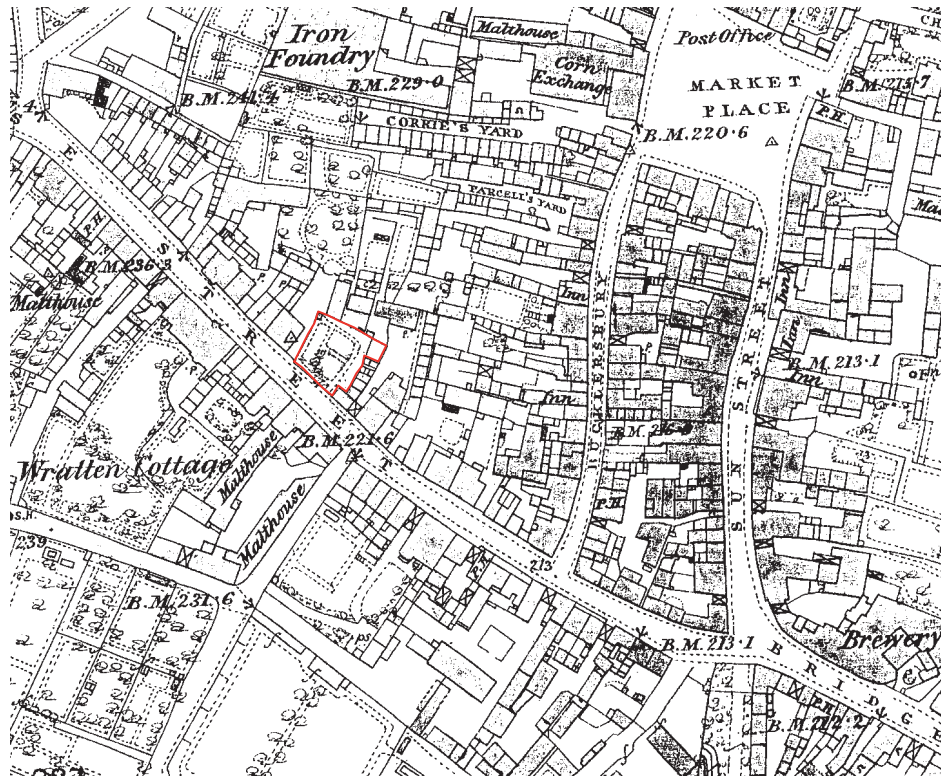
Figure 6



Tracing from Map of Hitchin, 1851

1:1000

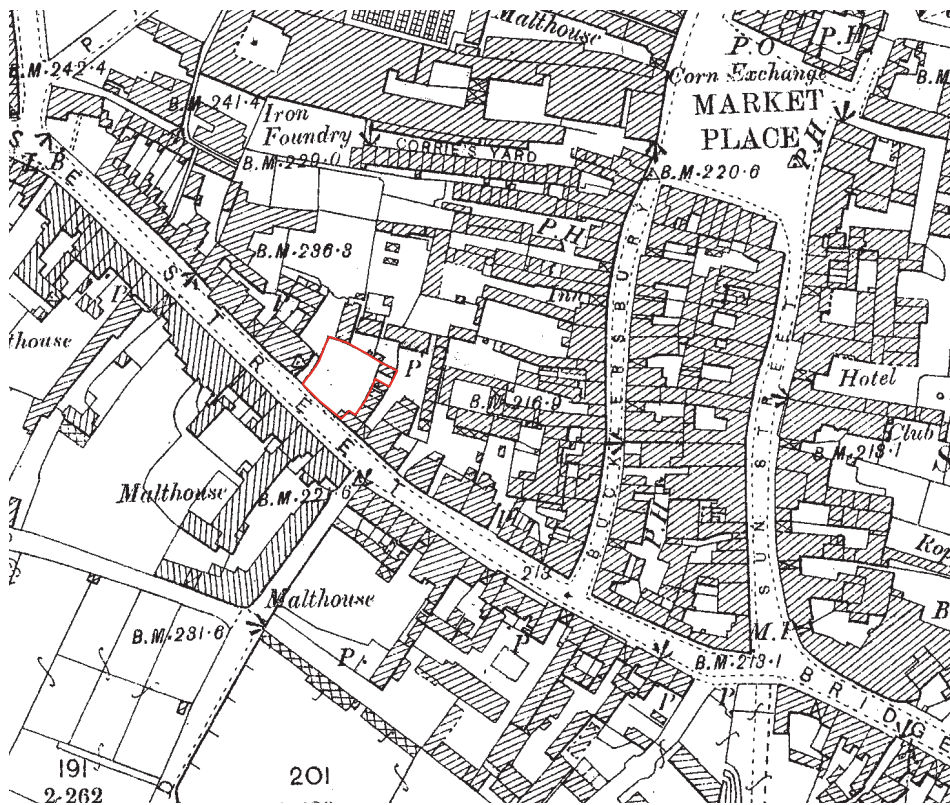
Figure 7



Ordnance Survey, 1886

Scale 1:2500

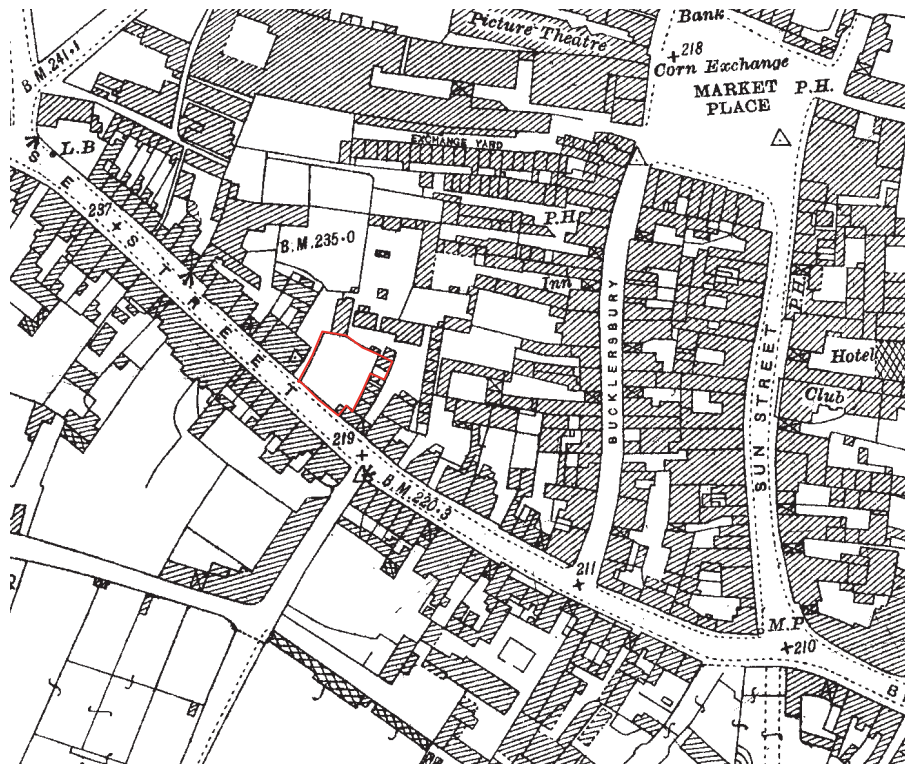
Figure 8



Ordnance Survey, 1898

Scale 1:2500

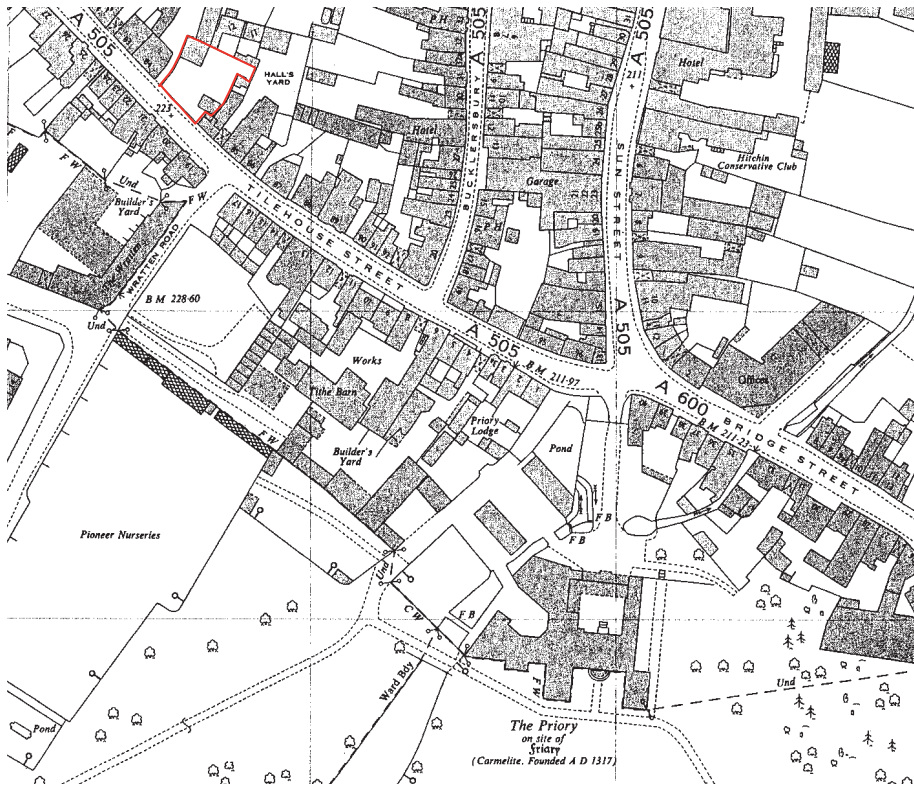
Figure 9



Ordnance Survey, 1923

Scale 1:2500

Figure 10



Ordnance Survey, 1966

Scale 1:2500

Figure 11