

Archaeological Services

A Photographic Survey of the Former Swonews

Newsagents, 53-55 Castle Street,

Hinckley, Leicestershire

(NGR SP 649 935)

Gerwyn Richards



A Photographic Survey of the Former Swonews Newsagents, 53-55 Castle Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire

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Planning Application No's: P.A 04/00203/6 & 04/00215/6

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A Photographic Survey of the Former Swonews, Newsagents, 53-55 Castle Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire, (NGR SP 649 935).

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Summary

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mr R. Hartley to undertake a photographic survey of the former Swonews Newsagents, Castle Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire. Planning permission had been granted to sub-divide the Grade II Listed building into two ground floor retail units and two residential units on the first and second floors.

The building is mainly early 19th century in date but is likely to have elements of an 18th century building which early cartographic sources record on the site. The ground floor was converted to retail use in the later 19th century with the insertion of the shop front windows. Evidence of this retail use remains throughout the building, including a wall mounted safe and hanging poles. A number of original early 19th century features also survived, including a number of doors, door furniture and structural timber work. Evidence of re-used beams could be seen within the attic space and 18th century fixtures and fittings remain within the building.

The photographic survey provided a permanent visual (photographic) record of the building in its current state. The archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council, under the museums accession number X.A31.2010.

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services was commissioned by Mr R. Hartley to undertake a photographic survey of the former Swonews Newsagents, 53-55 Castle Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire (SP 649 935). Planning permission has been granted for the sub-division of the ground floor into two retail units and for the conversion of the first and second floors into residential or office space (Planning Application No's P.A04/00203/6 & 04/00215/6).

As the proposed works will have a significant impact upon the historic fabric of the building, the Planning Archaeologist, Leicestershire County Council, on behalf of the planning authority has recommended that a scheme of historic building recording be carried out prior to the works commencing and secured by planning condition. The record should be undertaken to a level 1 standard as defined in *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (English Heritage 2006). This is essentially a photographic record. It was also a requirement of the planning authority that additional visits be carried out during the course of the proposed works.

The project followed the approved design specification (Appendix 1) and was completed in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Code of Conduct and adhered to their Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing buildings or Structures. In addition, Leicestershire County Council's Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire and Rutland was followed.

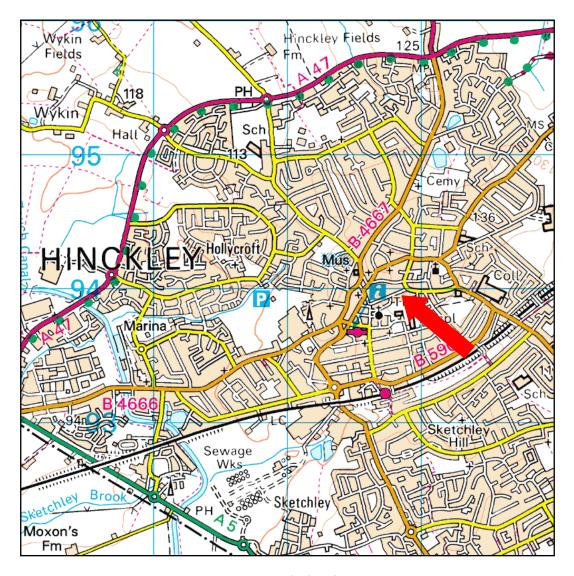


Figure 1. Site location

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Castle Street is one of the major streets through the town of Hinckley, it is also thought to be one of the earliest; it links the site of the castle, the church of St Mary and the Market Place. Number 53-55 is located at the north-eastern end of Castle Street on the southern side, 53 is the easternmost of the pair. The building is an early 19th century three storied red brick building, originally a house; the ground floor has a later nineteenth century shop front. The building was Grade II listed in 1989; the listing description records it thus:

SP 4293 NE TOWN OF HINCKLEY CASTLE STREET (south side) 16/39 11.5.82 Nos. 53 and 55 (Swonews) GV II House, now shop. Early to mid-C19 with later C19 shop front. Painted brick with plain tile roof and brick end stacks. 3 storeys with stuccoed cornice and boxed eaves. Regular 3-window front; 4-pane sashes with gauged brick flat-arched heads and raised key blocks. Wide shop-front on ground floor with inset glazed entrance door to right. Shafted mullions carrying deep fascia with dentilled cornice over. Included for group value.

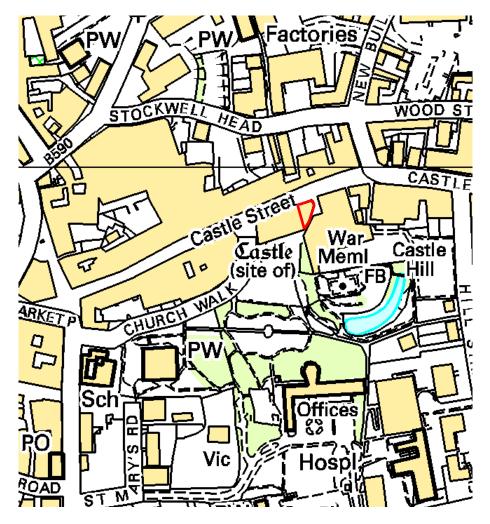


Figure 2 Location of 53-55 Castle Street.

2. Aims and Methodology

The aim of the survey was to provide a permanent photographic record of the buildings in their current state, prior to alteration or repair, to standards set down by English Heritage (2006).

The photographic survey was undertaken by Gerwyn Richards. The photographic survey covered items 1-6 in paragraph 4.4.7 of the English Heritage guidelines (2006, 11). Photographs, in 35mm monochrome negative, colour transparencies and digital

format taken as raw image files and converted to TIFFs (Tagged Image File Format). The site visits were carried out in June 2005 followed by a delay and work recommenced in March 2010. From March 2010 site visits were carried on March 1st, 4th, and June 23rd 2010.

Orientation: The building is L shape in plan, aligned east-north-east, to west-south-west and north-west to south-east; for ease of description this taken hereafter to be east to west with the principal elevation facing Castle Street to the north. Where the terms 'left', 'right', 'front' and 'back' etc. are used in the report, this is in relation to this principal elevation. For the purpose of this report each floor has been identified with a letter prefix; G (ground floor), F (first floor) and S (second floor), each room is then identified numerically.

No previous historic building recording has been undertaken of the building.

3. Description of the Building

The building is of red brick construction with a plain tile roof with brick end stacks. The west facing gable is rendered, and early cartographic evidence indicates there were originally buildings abutting this western gable. The bricks themselves are 2 inch handmade bricks laid in a Flemish Bond. There are three windows on the principal elevation at first and second floor level, all being pane sashes, while at first floor level there are flat arched brick heads with raised keys blocks and a stuccoed cornice at eaves level. There is also an iron tie plate towards the centre of the building near the ceiling height on the first floor where the wall clearly bows. The ground floor shop front has timber pilasters supporting a fascia with dentilled cornice and glazed brick stallriser. On the eastern corner there is a full height curved pane window with a jetty above. The main shop door is towards the western end of the elevation, within a small open lobby with an attractive mosaic floor bearing the name NOON above a shield design and foliate border (*Figure 4*), and moulded timber ceiling.

Internally, as expected, the ground floor has been altered considerably having been used as retail space and more recently gutted, leaving little of historic or architectural interest. The north-south partition wall is probably original and there are a number of wall stubs suggesting the location of other removed walls. Interestingly, the alcoves on the western gable of G2 have been in-filled with brick leaving only small recess cupboards. The first floor jetty is supported by two cast-iron columns visible in the north-easternmost corner. Nearby, there is a third column possibly supporting the chimney breast, which has been removed from the ground floor, but remains at first and second floor level. The southernmost part of G1 appears to be a later extension; the significant change in floor level supports this. Part of the original stair survives within G2. Originally the stair may have been a straight flight with a winder, since removed, leaving a straight flight with the newel post retained. The five lowest steps also retain the original decorative brackets on the string (Figure 8). A near identical example is recorded by Hall (2005) as coming from a late 19th century catalogue, suggesting this staircase was added when the building was converted to a shop in the later part of the 19th century.

At first floor level there are a number of historic and architectural features remaining; there is an axial beam visible within F1 and F2 as well as a possibly re-used beam with an empty mortise at ceiling height in the southernmost wall. There is an alcove within F1 in what appears to be a blocked door towards the southern end of the north-south partition wall. An apparently 18th century two panelled door remained *in-situ* and was exposed during stripping out (*Figure 6*), the more central door being apparently later. The majority of the original hardwood floor boards also survive. Within room F3 there is what appears to be a chimney breast in the north-east corner. There is no evidence of an external chimney stack, although there is an unusual change in the roof line and a crudely blocked opening visible, which may relate to this feature. Also visible on the south-facing elevation is the outline of a removed pitched roof over room G1.

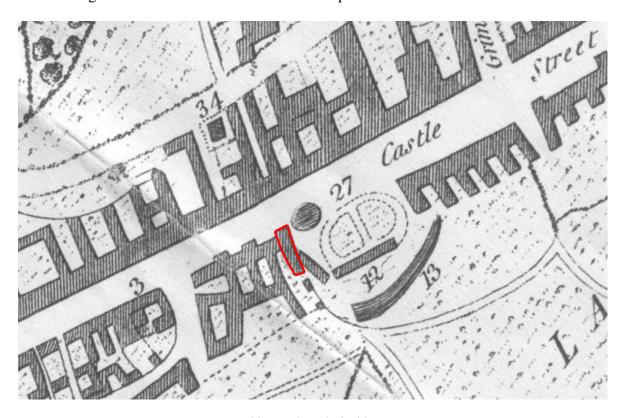


Figure 3 Robinson Plan of Hinckley, 1782. (Proposed development area highlighted in red)

Two original looking plank and batten doors are also present within the rear wing, one of which has apparently 18th century L and H hinges.

The two rooms on the second floor have remained largely unaltered, but again lack any significant historical or architectural features; this is mainly as a result of these rooms originally being rather plain. The only significant feature is the retained clothes rails suspended from the ceiling within S2, suggesting the room may have had a non-domestic use. There was also what appeared to be an early, and possibly original, fire surround on the westernmost gable. An original purlin is partially exposed on the rear roof. Within the attic space there is a limited view of a re-used timber with overly large peg holes being used as a lintel within the firewall (*Figure 5*).

Further site visits during the renovation works recorded additional exposed timbers including a chamfered axial beam within room F1; the beam had been visible on prior visits but had been underboarded, obscuring the chamfer. A blocked window was also recorded on the eastern wall of S1, towards the rear wall. Evidence of a removed chimney breast was recorded on the ground floor (G2), which included a brick arch and two substantial, sawn off timbers. Interestingly, one of which was later repaired with an inserted chamfered beam (*Figure 7*). The exact chronology and reason for this alteration is unclear, other than the fact that the original beam was removed for some reason and then the newer beam was later inserted and bolted to the stub of the original beam at its western end. It is likely that the beam stub is a remnant of the original 18th century building.

Further stripping out of the ground floor revealed two blocked windows on the western wall. The wall is not straight, this twisting to the south east is clearly visible on the Robinson Plan of 1782 (*Figure 3*), it is almost certain, therefore, that this part of the building is retained from the 18th century building.

4. Discussion

No. 53-55 Castle Street is a good example of an early 19th century provincial residential property of better than average status based upon an extensively re-modelled 18th century building. Cartographic evidence indicates that during the late 18th century there was a building on the site, possibly gable on to Castle Street. During the late 19th century the building was again re-modelled with the addition of a glazed shop frontage and re-built and altered staircase. The building then appeared to remain largely unaltered until the recent renovation work commenced.

Originally, it is likely that the building was built on the fringe of 18th century Hinckley, the original medieval and post-medieval core being further to the west; it is likely that the building became retail space with the expansion of the town during the late 19th century when the town grew and expanded as a result of the growth in the hosiery trade. It is possible that the original owners moved on as the town expanded to encompass the house and the house may have been sold or let to become shop and remained largely unaltered thereafter.

5. Bibliography

English Heritage, 2006 Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice. London: English Heritage.

Hall, L. 2005. Period House Fixtures and Fittings. Newbury: Countryside Books.

Harris, R. 2006 Discovering Timber-Framed Buildings. Shire Books.

McKay, W.B. 1945 Building Craft Series, Brickwork. Longmans, Green & Co.

6. Archive & Publication

The site archive consists of

DVD containing 44 digital images

2 Contact sheets

121 Black & White negatives and contact prints

98 Colour transparencies

5 A4 photo record sheets

5 A2 paper drawings of plans & elevations (existing and proposed)

1 A4 paper copy of listing description

Unbound copy of this report (ULAS Report Number 2010-202)

The archive will be held at Leicester County Council Museums under the Accession Number X.A31.2010

A version of the summary (above) will be submitted to the editor of the local journal *Transactions of Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* for inclusion in the next edition.

The report is listed on the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York under ID: universi1-85072. Available at: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit/query.cfm.

Oasis Summary

INFORMATION REQUIRED	EXAMPLE
Project Name	53-55 Castle Street, Hinckley
Project Type	Building recording
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Gerwyn Richards
Previous/Future work	None
Current Land Use	Retail
Development Type	Building conversions
Reason for Investigation	PPG16
Position in the Planning Process	As a condition
Site Co ordinates	SP 649 935
Start/end dates of field work	June 2005-June 2010
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council
Height min/max	c. 125m OD
Study Area	0.1 ha
Finds	Not applicable

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7. Photographic Index

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	003	003	G1	General View, Back to Front.	
	004	004	G1	General View, Back to Front.	
	005	005	G1	Tongued & Groved Ceiling.	
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	007	007	G1	Exterior Wall & Cast Iron Vents.	
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	014	014	G2	Right Hand Gable Wall.	
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	016	016	G2	Original Recess Cupboards.	
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	020	020	G3	General View, Front to Back.	
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8. Colour Plates



Figure 4 Mosaic floor in the lobby entrance.



Figure 5 Limited view of re-used timber in attic space.



Figure 6 Original 2 panel door within F2.

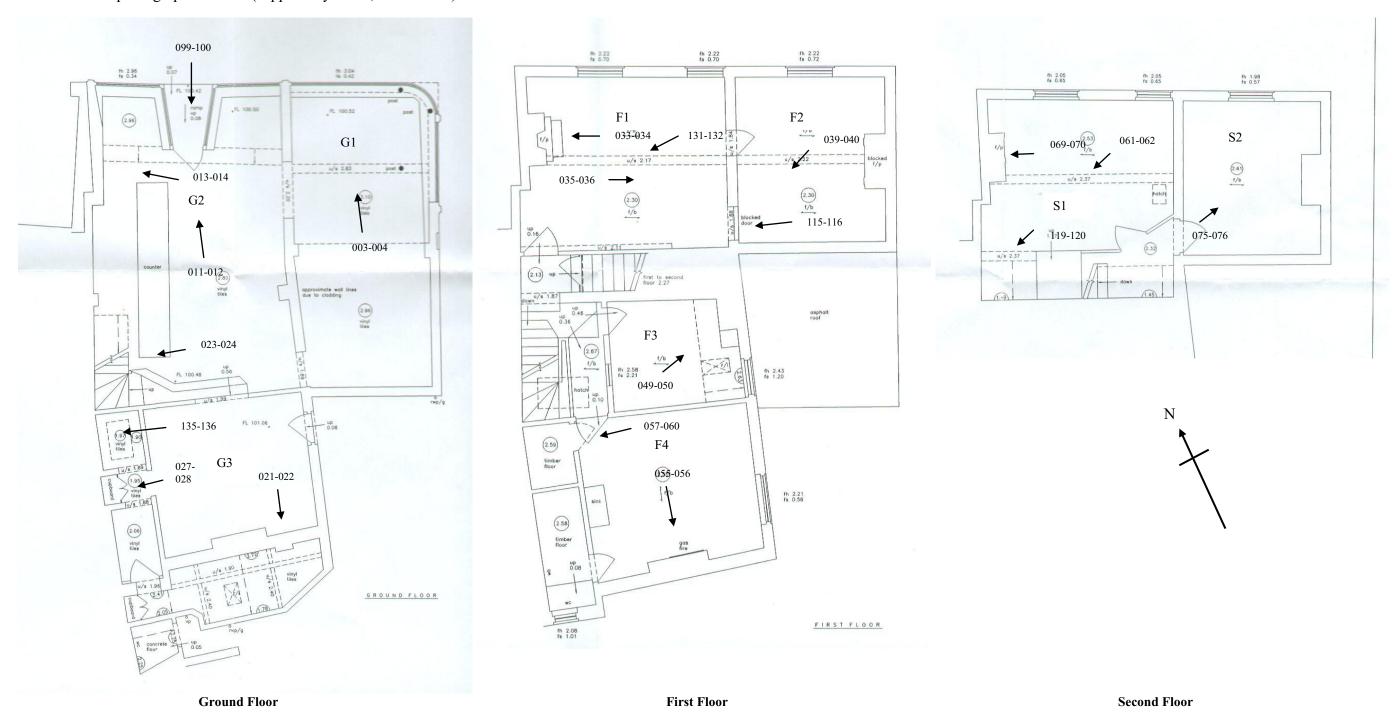


Figure 7 Inserted chamfered beam within G2.



Figure 8 Decorative brackets on string.

Figure 9 Floor plans showing principal sub-divisions & selected photograph locations(supplied by client, not to scale).



UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Design Specification for Photographic Survey

Swonews, 53-55 Castle Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire NGR: SP 649 935

P.A 04/00203/6 and 04/00215/6.

Client: Mr R Hartley

Planning Authority: Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

1 Introduction

1.1 Definition and scope of the specification

This document is a design specification for a photographic survey at the above site, in accordance with DOE Planning Policy Guidance note 16 (PPG16). The fieldwork specified below is intended to provide a record by photography of the existing structures on the site prior to demolition, at the request of the Planning Authority.

1.2 The document provides details of the work proposed by ULAS on behalf of the client.

2. Background

2.1 Context of the Project

- 2.1.1 The site comprises a grade II Listed Building of early 19th century date (see Appendix 2) which is to be converted with two shop units at ground floor level with living or office accommodation on the first and second floors..
- 2.1.3 Development proposals for the conversion have been submitted to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. The Senior Planning Archaeologist at Leicestershire County Council, Heritage Services has advised the planning authority that a photographic survey of the existing buildings should be undertaken prior to conversion (advice letter 4.3.2004) with further visits to record the alterations during conversion.

3. Archaeological Objectives

- 3.1 The purpose of the archaeological work may be summarised as follows:
 - 'The recording by photography of the building that is to be with specific attention given to those elements proposed for demolition, conversion and/or alteration. This work to be undertaken to a standard that will allow the future interpretation of the building within the context for which it was originally designed and which subsequently evolved.'
 - To produce an archive and report of the results.

4. Methodology

4.1 General Methodology and Standards

- 4.1.1 The photographic record of all main, accessible, areas of the standing building on the site is required, and that as this entails total loss it should be made to Level 3 of the RCHME 'Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification' (RCHME, *Third Edition*, 1996).
- 4.1.2 The specific levels of detailed required include items 1-6 of the RCHME specification for photography.

- Item 1: General view or views of the exterior of the building.
- Item 2: The overall appearance of principal rooms and circulation areas.
- Item 3: Detailed coverage of the building's exterior appearance.
- Item 4: Any external detail, structural or decorative, which is relevant to the building's design, development and use and which does not show adequately on general photographs.
- Item 5: The building's relationship to its setting, to other buildings, or to a significant viewpoint.
- Item 6: Internal detail, structural and decorative, which is relevant to the building's design, development and use, and which does not show adequately on general photographs.
- 4.1.3 Photographs will be taken in 35mm format using both black and white print, colour transparency film, supplemented by colour print film and digital images as appropriate.
- 4.1.4 All work will follow the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IF) Code of Conduct and adhere to their Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing buildings or Structures. In addition, Leicestershire County Council's Guidelines and Procedures for Archaeological Work in Leicestershire will be adhered to. The Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME) Recording Historic Buildings: a Descriptive Specification (3rd edition, 1996) has been used as a basis for defining levels of recording.
- 4.1.5 Staffing, Recording systems, Health and Safety provisions and Insurance details are provided.

5. Report and Archive

- 5.1 The full report in A4 format will usually follow within eight weeks of the completion of the fieldwork and copies will be directed to the Conservation Officer at Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (1 copy), to Heritage Services at Leicestershire County Council (1 copy), and to the Leicestershire Sites and Monuments Record in the Heritage Services at the County Council (1 copies).
- 5.2 The report will include consideration of:
 - The aims and methods adopted in the course of the work.
 - The location, date, significance and quality of the building.
 - Summary.
 - The location and size of the archive.

6 Publication and Dissemination of Results

6.1 A summary of the work will be submitted to the local archaeological journal, the *Transactions* of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society. A larger report will be submitted for inclusion if the results of the evaluation warrant it.

7. Copyright

7.1 The copyright of all original finished documents shall remain vested in ULAS and ULAS will be entitled as of right to publish any material in any form produced as a result of its investigations.

8. Timetable

8.1 A visit in August 2004 is to be arranged with the client.

9. Health and Safety

9.1 A Risks assessment form will be completed prior to work commencing on-site, and updated as necessary during the site works.

10 Insurance

All employees, consultants and volunteers are covered by the University of Leicester public liability insurance, £20m cover with Gerling Insurance Service Co. Ltd. and others (leading policy no. 62/99094/D). Professional indemnity insurance is with Royal and Sun Alliance, £10m cover, policy no. 03A/SA 001 05978. Employer's Liability Insurance is with Eagle Star, cover £25m. Copies of the certificates are attached.

11. Monitoring arrangements

- 11.1 Unlimited access to monitor the project will be available to both the Client and his representatives and Planning Archaeologist subject to the health and safety requirements of the site. Notice will be given to the Leicestershire Planning Archaeologist before the commencement of the archaeological evaluation in order that monitoring arrangements can be made.
- 11.2 All monitoring shall be carried out in accordance with the IFA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations*.
- 11.3 Internal monitoring will be carried out by the ULAS project manager.

12. Contingencies and unforeseen circumstances

12.1 In the event that unforeseen archaeological discoveries are made during the project, ULAS shall inform the site agent/project manager, Client and the Planning Archaeologist and Planning Authority and prepare a short written statement with plan detailing the archaeological evidence. Following assessment of the archaeological remains by the Planning Archaeologist, ULAS shall, if required, implement an amended scheme of investigation on behalf of the client as appropriate.

13. Bibliography

RCHME 1996 Recording Historic Buildings; A Descriptive Specification Third Edition, Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England

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APPENDIX 1

Draft Project Health and Safety Policy Statement:

Swonews, 53-55 Castle Street, Hinckley, Leicestershire

NGR: SP 649 935 Client: Mr R Hartley

Planning Authority: Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

A risks assessment will be produced by on-site staff, which will be updated and amended

- 1. Nature of the work during the course of the survey
- 1.1 The work will involve internal and external photographic record of the existing building.
- 2 Risks Assessment
- 2.1 Working within a derelict building.

Precautions. University of Leicester Archaeological Services has been led to believe that it is safe to enter the majority of the building.

The archaeological building recorder will only enter rooms that they feel are safe.

2.2 Other risks

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Precautions. If unforeseen hazards being encountered e.g. pigeon guano or other contaminants or hazards are identified, such areas will not be entered, and the client will be informed of the risk.

Appendix 2 Listing description

Location: HINCKLEY, HINCKLEY AND BOSWORTH, LEICESTERSHIRE

IoE number: 188168 Date listed: 10 AUG 1989

Date of last amendment: 10 AUG 1989

SP 4293 NE	TOWN OF HINCKLEY	CASTLE STREET (south side)
16/39		3.43)
11.5.82		Nos. 53 and 55 (Swonews)

ΙΙ

House, now shop. Early to mid-C19 with later C19 shop front. Painted brick with plain tile roof and brick end stacks. 3 storeys with stuccoed cornice and boxed eaves. Regular 3-window front; 4-pane sashes with gauged brick flat-arched heads and raised key blocks. Wide shop-front on ground floor with inset glazed entrance door to right. Shafted mullions carrying deep fascia with dentilled cornice over. Included for group value.

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