

**Historic Building Record:
59 & 59a Highcross Street, Leicester
NGR SK 5835 0464**

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Historic Building Record: 59 & 59a Highcross Street, Leicester

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Summary Statement

It is planned to convert the grade II listed mid 18th century former town house at 59 and 59a Highcross Street, Leicester into a restaurant as part of the Shires West Development.

A preliminary Historic Building Statement was prepared in November 2004 and a Supplementary Statement on the rear range of number 59 in January 2005 (ULAS report 2005/012) at which time only very limited access to the interior of the building was available. As a result it was not possible then to arrive at a clear understanding of the original plan form and development sequence of the building, or to determine the extent to which early historic architectural details had survived internally (Appendices 1& 2).

Once access to the interior of the building became available, an initial site visit indicated that a Historic Building Survey was required in order to properly understand the plan form, structure and development sequence of the building. Subdivision of 59a into flats in the 1990s and the insertion of various late 20th century partition walls within 59, served both to confuse the interior layout and conceal early decorative and structural details. It was therefore agreed that some limited intrusive investigation was appropriate as part of this survey.

A Level 2 Historic Building Survey, as defined in the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England guidelines *Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification*, has been completed (RCHME 1996, 3rd edition). Its purpose is to provide the baseline data necessary to: 1) facilitate the preparation of development plans sensitive to the historic character and fabric of the building; and 2) permit the formulation of appropriate and informed planning decisions in respect of the development proposals. The survey also provides a permanent record of the building in its present state, to a recognised standard, prior to any alterations.

The Historic Building Survey has established that the street frontage range was constructed in 1756 incorporating an earlier, brick-built rear wing, behind 59a, which probably dates to the early 18th century. Elements of an earlier building on the site of number 59 were also incorporated into the 1756 structure; one of the cellar rooms beneath number 59 is stone-built and extends further to the south than the extant building. The southern part of this cellar is seen on the adjacent archaeological excavation site. Part of the brick-built south wall of number 59 may also be retained from an earlier structural phase.

The distinction between 'polite' areas - occupied by the family - and 'service' areas is apparent in the layout of the 18th century building and in the decorative treatment of individual rooms. The service accommodation was largely confined to the back range, with the present 59a staircase being the service stair.

A good series of early decorative details survive within number 59, particularly on the upper floors, including doors, doorframes, fire surrounds, skirting and fitted cupboards, all consistent with a mid 18th century construction date.

Documentary and cartographic evidence indicates that the building was divided into two properties possibly in 1830 but certainly before 1863. Many of the surviving decorative details within 59a are attributable to this period, including rising shutters, skirting boards, fitted cupboards, cornices and ceiling roses, indicating that this half of the building was updated at that time. Many of these details are now concealed by stud walls and ceilings inserted as part of the 1990s work to subdivide 59a into flats, but do survive intact.

Intrusive investigation has located the position of original internal doorways blocked when the building was subdivided in the 19th century.

Survey drawings have been prepared to illustrate this report showing the plan form of the building prior to the 1990s alterations to number 59a (Figures 5-8). Inserted partition walls are omitted and the positions of stud walls removed at that time are indicated. This evidence is derived from a survey and photographs of 59a taken prior to these alterations by the then owner. Inserted partition walls within number 59, attributable to the late 20th century, are also omitted for the sake of clarity.

Historic Building Record: 59 & 59a Highcross Street, Leicester

1. Introduction

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) has undertaken a Historic Building Survey of 59 & 59a Highcross Street, Leicester, NGR SK 5835 0464, on behalf of Hammerson Plc, in respect of a proposal to convert this Grade II listed, mid 18th century former town house into a restaurant, as part of the Shires West Development.

This report presents the results of the Level 2 Historic Building Survey, as defined in the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England guidelines *Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification* (RCHME 1996, 3rd edition). It incorporates and expands upon information gathered as part of an earlier Historic Building Statement and Supplementary Statement (ULAS report 2005/012). These earlier reports are included as Appendices for the sake of completeness. An archive consisting of drawn, photographic and written records, including detail drawings of surviving internal decorative features, has been compiled and will be deposited in due course with Leicester City Museums Service under the accession code A20.2006.

The survey was conducted in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Buildings or Structures* (IFA 1996).

2. Aims

This report is intended to provide the baseline data necessary to: 1) facilitate the preparation of development plans sensitive to the historic character and fabric of the building; and 2) permit the formulation of appropriate and informed planning decisions in respect of the development proposals. The survey also provides a permanent record of the building in its present state, to a recognised standard, prior to any alterations.

3. Methodology

A full set of survey drawings produced by On Centre Surveys Ltd was supplied by Cyril Sweet on behalf of the client; floor plans are reproduced here as Figures 2-4. Printouts of these were verified on site for accuracy and supplemented with the addition of historic architectural details. A separate set of floor plans has been prepared to illustrate this report (Figures 5-8). Modern stud partition walls attributable to the late 20th century, which serve to confuse the early plan form, have been omitted from these drawings. Early partition walls known to have been removed or modified in the course of the 1990s redevelopment of number 59a, are also indicated. This information is derived from a survey of number 59a made prior to the 1990s alterations for the then owner Noel Weafer. Copies of photographs taken at the same time have also been provided by Mr Weafer. Detail drawings of surviving historic architectural features have been recorded on A3 permagraph drawing sheets and are included as part of the site archive. A written record was compiled and photographic survey, in 35mm monochrome negative and colour slide formats, was completed. Limited intrusive investigation, typically involving the removal of modern wall coverings or cladding, served to determine the position of blocked openings and clarify whether historic architectural details had survived. The written account collates information from a variety of sources, in addition to the primary evidence of the building itself. Nineteenth century trade directories have been particularly useful and relevant entries are catalogued below. Other historical and cartographic sources are listed in Appendix 1 & Appendix 2. Selected photographs illustrate the written account and are included at the end of this report.

4. General Description and Outline Chronology

The Grade II listed building is a former Georgian town house of substantial proportions, now divided into two properties: numbers 59 and 59a Highcross Street. The three-storey frontage range was built in 1756; a two-storey brick-built rear wing, behind 59a, is slightly earlier in date, probably early 18th century. There is

also an earlier stone-built cellar beneath number 59 which extends further to the south than the extant building and is also seen on the adjacent Freeschool Lane excavation site. Behind number 59 there is a small two-storey block of late 19th century date. On the east side of this is a single-storey flat roofed range, of 19th century origin but substantially rebuilt in the late 20th century. A large single-storey flat-roofed block built up to the southern boundary of the plot was added after 1961 (Figure 6; see also Appendix 2).

4.1 Recent History

Number 59 Highcross Street functioned most recently as the Rajah Restaurant, with rooms on the upper floors used for storage and accommodation. Number 59a was converted during the 1990s into five separate, one-bedroom apartments. Both halves of the building were vacated in January 2006 in compliance with a Compulsory Purchase Order.

5. Description of the Building

5.1 Exterior

The Highcross Street elevation (Plate 1) is five sash window bays wide, of red brick with gauged arches, with painted stone bands at first and second floor level and at first floor sill level. It has a slightly projecting crowning cornice and frieze band, somewhat small-scaled and a low parapet above, now clad in lead. The central front door, possibly originally flanked by sidelights, has a semi-circular fanlight. The south (right-hand) half of the ground floor façade is rendered with two recent sash windows that are much smaller than those of the rest of the façade. North of the main entrance the ground storey façade (59a) has been reinstated in domestic form within the last decade or so, using reclaimed brickwork and good replica sash windows, replacing a much altered early 19th century shop front which is seen in early photographs (Appendix 1, Figures 3-4). The roof is covered in non-local slate, probably Welsh slate.

The entrance door surround to number 59a, in the north elevation, is in larger brickwork than the façade and presumably dates to the conversion of the building into two units in the 19th century. The south gable wall of the frontage block has a modern skin wall reinforcing the brickwork where an adjacent building has been demolished. A brick bearing the inscribed date 1756 is set into the north wall (Plate 25). This was moved from its original position at first floor level when number 59a was remodelled in the 1990s, it is now located to the right hand side of the 59a entrance.

The alignment of the two-storey rear wing behind 59a is offset from the parent building (Plate 2). There are at least two distinct phases of build in the north wall of this rear block, using two different types and sizes of brick. The earliest phase of brickwork is attributable to the early 18th century. The later phase of brickwork appears to have been added to mask alterations to window and/or door openings in this elevation.

The east elevation of the 18th century frontage range is visible above the later 19th and 20th century additions. Re-pointing of the 59a portion of this elevation gives the impression of two distinct phases of brickwork, however closer inspection confirms that this elevation is of one build, though with some areas of later patching where a first floor window opening has been altered and a second floor window converted into a fire escape door (Appendix 2, Figure 1).

5.2 Interior

An arbitrary room numbering system has been adopted for the purpose of simplifying description. These room numbers are shown on the floor plans: Figures 5-8. Cellar rooms are prefixed C.

5.2.1 59 Highcross Street

Ground Floor

Entrance Hall and Staircase

The ground floor of number 59 lately formed the dining area of the Rajah Restaurant and a partially open plan arrangement has been contrived with the removal of one wall and partial removal of another (Plate 3). The existing entrance vestibule is a recent creation and formerly this area would have been open onto the entrance hall and main staircase. Directly opposite the principal entrance is the fine, open string main staircase with turned newels, two turned balusters to each tread, carved tread ends and a wide, mahogany, ramped handrail (Plate 4).

At the foot of the stairs, on the north side, is evidence of a blocked doorway with a segmental relieving arch over a timber lintel (Plate 3). This blocked opening was the principal access through from the entrance hall into the largest of the ground floor rooms of the 18th century house, now Flat 1 of number 59a (Room 9 on Figure 6). Under the stairs, a flight of 20th century concrete steps, occupying the position of an earlier staircase, leads down to the cellar. At the top of this flight of steps, in the north wall, is a blocked opening which formerly gave access to the service entrance, service staircase and rear wing.

Room 1

Room 1 is open onto the entrance hall, its north wall having been largely removed (Plate 3). There is a blocked fireplace in the south wall. The only surviving early feature in this room is a ceiling cornice which is mostly hidden by a modern suspended ceiling incorporating a large *cupola*- part of the restaurant décor. There is damage to the cornice on the west side of the room, its condition elsewhere is uncertain. The early ceiling has been truncated over the centre of the room to accommodate the *cupola*.

Room 2

This room was originally heated by a fireplace in the west wall, now blocked. The stack remains but the wing walls on either side have been removed opening this room onto Room 1. An early ceiling cornice survives above a modern suspended ceiling with *cupola*, similar to that in Room 1. An opening in the east wall of this room leads into the single-storey flat roofed extension built after 1961 (see Appendix 2).

Restaurant Kitchen

No significant features are visible within the former restaurant kitchen, which occupies the lower portion of the small late 19th century two-storey block (see next section) and the adjacent single-storey flat-roofed extension, of 19th century origin but largely rebuilt in the late 20th century (Appendix 2).

First Floor

Off the half landing between ground and first floors is the upper room of the small two-storey late 19th century block. This latterly served as the restaurant toilets and all internal fittings are recent. This space may have functioned originally as a water closet, given the small size and location of this block. An 18th century window lighting the half landing was modified to create the doorway.

There are two principal rooms and a smaller box room on the first floor, opening off the landing. There is early skirting and a cornice to the landing area and a 19th century panelled cupboard in the north-west corner.

This cupboard partially masks a blocked doorway which originally gave access to the third principal first floor room, now Flat 4 of number 59a (Room 13). The blocked doorway was partially exposed revealing a timber lintel with brick relieving arch over (Plate 7). The floor of the landing is of gypsum plaster on reed type.

Room 3

Room 3 overlooks Highcross Street (Plate 5). It has an early 6-panel door with L-hinges and the surround has moulded architrave on both faces. Early skirting survives throughout, interrupted only on the south wall where the fireplace would have been. The fireplace was blocked and the surround was removed some time in the past. A (broken) slate hearth remains. A moulded picture rail, probably 19th century, is intact around the room. This room is lit by two sash windows in the west wall. In both of these the upper sash is early but the lower is a later replacement.

In the south-west corner of the room is a narrow cupboard, recessed into the south gable end wall; this has a modern door. Limited intrusive investigation within the cupboard determined that the south gable wall is only 4½ inches (114mm) thick at this point, with hair-tempered plaster on both faces. Within the cupboard, the plaster stops vertically, beyond the inner brickwork leaf of the west façade wall. The façade wall is *c.* 14 inches (356mm) thick and there is no tying in to the south gable wall for the inner 9 inches (229mm) of this. The outer leaf of the façade wall runs past the gable wall and is tied into it.

The plaster on the south gable wall running behind the façade wall may indicate that the former is earlier in date than the latter, presumably reused from an earlier building on the site; however the exposed brickwork of the south wall appears to be similar to that of the façade wall. An alternative explanation is that the west façade wall may have been thickened at some stage with the addition of an inner leaf of brick to what was originally a 9 inch (229mm) wide wall.

The floor structure in this room (as elsewhere) is of an unusual form, with a substantial transverse beam set at a distinct angle, as shown on Figure 7. Each of the floor joists is joined into the upper face of this beam with a barefaced lap dovetail. The floor covering is 4½ inch (114mm) wide softwood tongue and groove boards (*cf.* wide butted boards in Room 4 cupboard (see below)). Fittings for a service bell pull system were noted in the sub floor void.

Room 4

This room was latterly used as a storage area for the restaurant (Plate 6). The doorway has an early moulded architrave to both faces, but houses a modern, plywood door. There is early skirting throughout the room, matching that of Room 3. The fireplace has a cast-iron arch plate register grate of a type which became popular in the 1850s (Eveleigh 1983, 8-9). The fire surround is plain, of painted stone or marble and may be 18th century. To the left-hand side of the fireplace is an 18th century, panelled, fitted cupboard, with H-hinges. A large, modern window in the east wall lights this room. The ceiling is modern fibreboard. The floor structure in this room is similar to that of Room 3 except that there are two angled transverse beams into which the joists are joined. At the south end of the room the ends of the floor joists are supported on a further transverse beam set against the inside face of the south gable wall. The floor covering is 4½ inch (114mm) wide tongue and groove boards, except beneath the early fitted cupboard where there are earlier butted boards 6 - 6 ½ inches (152-165mm) wide. These evidently extended into the room originally, but have been crudely sawn through in line with the front of the cupboard.

Room 5

Room 5 is an unheated box room located above the entrance hall, at the front of the building. The most recent use for the room is not clear, but it may have served as domestic accommodation for restaurant staff. Surviving early skirting is plainer in style than that of Rooms 3 and 4. The sash window is as those of Room 3, with the upper portion earlier than the lower. A moulded architrave to both sides of the doorway is also early- the 6 panel door appears to be a 19th century replacement.

Second Floor

Staircase and Landing

The main staircase is of plainer form between the first and second floors; newel posts are less ornate, there are plain stick balusters and the handrail is narrower in section. Modern cladding obscures the final return section of the handrail and balusters on the second floor landing, but intrusive investigation indicates that this is intact. The arrangement of the second floor mirrors that of the first, with each of the three rooms accessed from a central landing. A blocked opening in the north wall originally provided access to a fourth room (now part of 59a, Room 18), prior to the subdivision of the building in the 19th century. The landing area has plain, early skirting and solid gypsum plaster type flooring on reeds.

Room 6

Room 6 is a large room located at the front of the building and recently served as sleeping quarters (presumably for staff working at the restaurant) (Plate 8). This room has an 18th century 4-panelled door with L-hinges. Architraves on both sides of the surround are early, with a more elaborate moulding displayed on the 'public', external face. There is an 18th century timber, eared fire surround although the hob grate has been removed. Skirting in this room and in Room 7 matches that seen in Rooms 3 and 4 on the floor below, and is present throughout with the exception of the wall dividing this from Room 8, which has plain skirting. There is a recessed cupboard in the south-west corner of the room which has an 18th century 2-panel door, complete with early latch handle and H-hinges (Plate 9). Evidence from the brickwork within the cupboard reveals a similar arrangement to that found on the first floor at this point. It is also evident that the south gable wall is not tied into the chimney stack serving this room, or to the internal wall dividing this room from Room 7. The floor structure is comparable with that of Room 3 below.

Room 7

Room 7, towards the rear of the building, is presently sub-divided by plywood partitions to form an office space and washroom with toilet and hand-basin (Plate 10). Enclosed within the office space, on the west wall, is the original fireplace. This has a plain, painted slate surround, similar in style to that of Room 4 below, and a Forest pattern hob grate (Plate 11). The fireplace was intact at the time of the initial survey, but was subsequently partially dismantled by persons unknown, resulting in damage to some of the slate pieces, although all the component parts are present and reconstruction should be straightforward. Adjacent to the fireplace is an 18th century panelled, fitted cupboard with H-hinges (Plate 12). The door and surrounding architrave to this room, in addition to the skirting are also early and match those of Room 6. The south gable end wall does not appear to be properly tied into the rear (east) wall of the building: there is evidence of broken brickwork that may again indicate that the south wall is retained from an earlier structural phase. The floor structure in this room appears to be the same as that in Room 4 directly below.

Room 8

Room 8, an unheated box room located at the front of the building, was used until recently as a bedroom. This has an early 4-panelled door, the surround to which has a moulded architrave and integral 6-pane overlight (Plate 13). The room has plain early skirting and gypsum plaster type flooring.

Roof Structure

The roof space over this half of the building is accessed through a hatch on the second floor landing (cf. Plate 24). A king-post roof truss over the centre of Rooms 6 & 7 supports two sets of purlins, the outer ends of which are carried on the cross-walls. The king-post has a raised and splayed head housing a ridge plate and sloping joggles at its foot. The king-post is both tenoned and through bolted to the tiebeam. The principals are tenoned and pegged to the king-post and the tie-beam. Raking braces rise from the sloping joggles of the king-post and are notched into the principals (see JWP Campbell: Naming the parts of post-medieval roof

structures VA 31 (2000) for an explanation of these terms). The roof covering is non-local slate, probably Welsh. The flues serving the fireplaces heating the front and rear rooms in this half of the building gather within the roof space into a single stack at the apex of the south gable. Over Room 8 and the second floor landing, a lead-lined timber channel conducts rainwater from the box guttering on the frontage through the roof void and out to the rear of the building. Elements of a service bell pull system were noted in the roof space. A pair of panelled doors stored in the roof void matches the width of the front door opening.

Cellar

There are two cellar rooms below number 59, in addition to a small lobby area at the foot of the cellar stairs. Room C1, beneath the east (rear) section of the frontage range, has stone-built north, east and west walls and clearly pre-dates the 18th century structure above (Plate 19). The south wall is 18th century brick. The east and west walls are seen to extend c.5m further to the south on the adjacent archaeological excavation site, with the original south wall of this cellar corresponding with a long-lived property boundary of medieval origin. Cellar Room C2 is located to the rear (east) of C1, at a lower level and is accessed from that room via a short flight of steps. C2 is brick-built with a shallow brick vault which has been reinforced with concrete beams carried on brick piers. There are three brick-lined recesses in the east wall and evidence of similar recesses, now blocked, in the north and south walls.

5.2.2 59a Highcross Street

Ground Floor

Entrance Hall and Staircase

The entrance to 59a Highcross Street is located in the north gable end wall of the building, accessed from a former carriage entrance leading off Highcross Street. The door and its brick surround are 19th century. This opens onto an entrance hall, with red and black quarry tile flooring in chequer-board pattern. Opposite the door is an open well staircase. This is the 18th service stair, plainer in style and narrower than the principal staircase (Plate 17). It has turned newels (though that at the foot of the stairs is a later replacement), open string, carved tread ends and a ramped mahogany handrail. Balusters are of plain stick form with every third one in cast-iron providing support for the handrail. A blocked entrance in the south wall, adjacent to the service stair, originally opened into the main hallway, beneath the principal staircase. Access to the rear range is also from this hallway. The original entrance to the 59a cellar was beneath the service staircase, though this is now blocked.

Room 9 (Flat 1)

On the west side of the service staircase is Room 9. Formerly one of the 'polite' front rooms of the 18th century house, this became a chemist's shop in the 19th century (Appendix 1, Figures 3&4). As part of the 1990s residential conversion it was subdivided with the insertion of a number of stud partition walls to form Flat 1, 59a Highcross Street. Survival of early decorative features is limited to a 19th century ceiling rose and cornice, located above the modern, suspended ceiling. The marble fire surround against the south wall is not *in situ*, but may have been re-sited from elsewhere in the building.

Service Rooms 10-12 (Flat 2)

Room 10

Room 10 probably functioned as a service room in the 18th century. Surviving early fixtures and fittings however, including a rising shutter to the window in the north wall and a fitted cupboard adjacent to the fireplace, appear to date to the mid-19th century, and may relate therefore to a scheme of upgrading and refurbishment following the sub-division of the property. An exposed ceiling beam, part of the 18th century structure, is chamfered with run-out stops. A photograph of this room prior to the residential conversion

shows that the fitted cupboard had previously had glazed doors: the glazing has now been replaced by wooden panels (Plate 14).

Room 11

The massive chimney stack located between Rooms 11 and 12 may indicate that this area was originally the kitchen. The present timber fire-surround with tiled insert can be dated c.1910-1920 (Plate 15). The sash window is the same as that within Room 10 and a rising shutter may survive here also.

Room 12

Room 12 was subdivided with stud partition walls in the 1990s to form a kitchen and bathroom (Plate 16). The only notable feature is an apparently early timber stud located against the north wall of the range, although it is not clear how, or if, this relates to the present structure. The absence of any joint evidence in this suggests that it is not the remnant of a timber-framed structure.

First Floor

Room 13 (Flat 4)

Room 13 is subdivided by modern stud partition walls forming a number of smaller rooms which make up Flat 4 of the 59a residential block. The principal entrance into this room, from the main landing, is blocked. Access is now from the service landing with the existing doorway formed within an earlier, taller arch-headed opening (Plate 17). The survey of the building made prior to the 1990s alterations indicates that there were formerly two storage cupboards in this area which defined a short passageway leading to Room 13. The arrangement is illustrated in Figure 7. The cupboards comprised of stud partition walls with plaster on reed. Elements of these remain in the current layout. The larger cupboard was unlit, whilst the smaller cupboard, against the north wall was lit by a small window that was relocated to a similar position on the second floor as part of the 1990s conversion. The floor in this room is of gypsum plaster type, the underlying structure was not seen, but a similar arrangement to that in number 59 may be supposed. Skirting probably dating to the mid-19th century survives around Room 13 and has been replicated reasonably well on some of the modern stud partition walling. The present marble fire surround is also 19th century.

Service Rooms 14 – 16 (Flat 3)

Room 14

No early features survive in this room. The present entrance is a recent insertion, the earlier doorway now blocked; its position is indicated on Figure 7.

Room 15

A stone fire surround in this room is early but may not be *in situ*. It may have been moved here from Room 10 in the 1990s, since a similar surround is shown in that room in a photograph prior to the refurbishment which is not now there (Plate 18).

Room 16

Room 16 is presently subdivided to form a modern kitchen and bathroom- the hipped roof structure has been exposed in the kitchen area. This room was originally lit by a window in the east gable wall, now blocked.

Roof Structure - Rear Range

The roof structure of the rear range consists of common rafter couples supported by purlins carried on the cross-walls. There is a crude truss arrangement over Room 14, with a collar between the purlins and nailed

braces between this and an untrimmed pole which serves as a tiebeam. There is a second truss of apparently similar form over Room 14 though this was not examined in detail. Two king-post trusses were subsequently inserted to provide additional support. The roof covering is Welsh slate.

Second Floor

Rooms 17 and 18 (Flat 5)

Evidence from the floor plans made prior to the 1990s conversion indicates that Flat 5 was formed from two separate second floor rooms, as illustrated in Figure 8. Room 17 opened off the service staircase. The final section of handrail and balustrade at the top of this staircase is missing and there is now a modern stud wall in this position. This room may have been unheated, possibly used for storage or service accommodation. There is a blocked doorway in the south wall of Room 18, opening onto the principal second floor landing. There was a secondary doorway from Room 17, opposite the service staircase which has been retained in the current layout, though the door is a modern replacement. A second door opening in this wall, to the north, is recent. No early fixtures or fittings appear to survive on this floor. The floor is again of gypsum plaster type. A variety of prostitution-related paraphernalia found within this flat at the time of the survey indicates that it was used most recently as a brothel and that this was a business, rather than a domestic arrangement. A series of diaries documenting the operation of the brothel, from its inception to closure have been retained and will be deposited with the Records Office for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Roof Structure

The roof void is accessed through a hatch in Room 17. It is of identical form to that of number 59, being part of the same structure (Plate 24). The upper portion of the north gable wall has been reinforced with the addition of an inner leaf of concrete blockwork as part of the 1990s work.

Cellar

The brick-built cellar beneath 59a is accessible via an inspection cover outside the front door to this range. It is not included in the On Centre survey. It was recorded by ULAS as part of the Historic Building Survey and is illustrated in Figure 5. Room C3 is beneath the entrance hall to 59a and at its south-west corner is a brick-built staircase, complete but capped, which formerly provided access to this cellar (Plate 21). This was blocked in the 1990s. Adjacent to the staircase, in the south wall is a blocked arch-headed opening which presumably formerly communicated with the cellar beneath number 59. Room C4 is located beneath the rear range of 59a, below Room 10. There is a low brick thrall around the north and west walls and the floor is paved in brick (Plate 22). There is a light/ventilation shaft in the north wall. An axial ceiling beam with chamfers and run-out stops supports the floor above. The narrow Room C5 has built in shelving constructed from brick and stone at its east end (Plate 23). The floor of the corridor above consists of large slate slabs.

6. Discussion

The form, construction and decorative detail of the frontage range are consistent with a mid 18th century date. It seems reasonable therefore to accept the date of 1756 inscribed on a brick built into the north wall as the construction date of this range. The rear range, behind 59a, is slightly earlier however, judging by the brickwork used in its construction. The earliest surviving smaller brick houses in Leicestershire date to the 1680s and 1690s. The use of brick at the vernacular level had become widespread within the county by c.1710 and a date around this time for the construction of the rear range seems likely (McWhirr 1997, 37, 49-50). It is fairly common to find earlier rear ranges retained and incorporated into newer frontage buildings, compare for example 42 Silver Street, Leicester, which has a timber framed wing behind the Georgian frontage range. There are one or two other areas of early brickwork, for example at the base of the chimneystack in the north gable wall of the frontage range (number 59a), which appear to have been retained and incorporated from an earlier building on the site. The stone-built cellar beneath number 59 is also earlier than the frontage range; this is not easily dated, but the absence of any brick in the exposed areas of fabric tends to suggest a date in or before the 17th century.

The form of the upper floor frames in the frontage range of number 59, with angled transverse beams and lap dovetailed joists, is unusual. A similar floor structure has been recorded in an early 19th century building in Great Easton, Leicestershire, dated 1819 (Nick Hill pers. comm.). It is assumed that the upper floor structures within the frontage section of 59a are of similar form though this could not be verified. Gypsum plaster may have been the original flooring material throughout the upper floors of the frontage range (although there are early butted boards within the fitted cupboard in Room 4). The tongue and groove boards within the principal rooms of number 59 are relatively recent. Charring of some of the floor frame timbers in Rooms 4 & 7 indicate a fire at some time, which may have necessitated replacement of the original floor covering. It is notable that much of the timber in the floor frames at 59 & 59a Highcross Street, as well as other timberwork (e.g. door lintels) was reused oak, probably derived from dismantled timber-framed structures.

The south gable wall of the 1756 building is not tied in well to the rest of the structure. It is not clear whether the wall is earlier, or whether this arrangement merely reflects typical constructional practice in the 18th century. It would be useful to compare the arrangement of the north gable wall at its junction with the east and west walls; this was not possible at the time of the survey.

The building was subdivided in the early 19th century. Henry Pickering, Chemist and Druggist, is listed at 59 Highcross Street in a directory of 1863. Photographs of *c.*1877 show that Pickering occupied what later became 59a Highcross Street (see Appendix 1, Figures 3 & 4). The signage above the shop entrance in these photographs states that the business was established in 1830, though whether at these premises is uncertain; it is a strong possibility however. Various surviving decorative details within 59a are attributable to this same period, including for example the rising shutters within the rear range. Shutters of this type were most common in the early 19th century (Hall 2005, 96). Other details such as the tall, angular skirting, marble fire surround and ceiling rose in Room 13, and the glazed cupboard in Room 10, are not closely dateable but are certainly 19th century and would be consistent with a phase of remodelling and updating between *c.* 1830 and 1863. The shop front of 59a illustrated in these early photographs remained, much altered, until the 1990s when the earlier domestic arrangement of this façade was reinstated.

Trade directories indicate that March & Pattison, Iron and Brass Founders, Stove Grate & Range Manufacturers, had showrooms at 59 Highcross Street in the late 19th century; their foundry was located directly to the rear (east). During the same period various other individuals are listed at 59 Highcross Street and it seems likely that these were tenants who occupied the upper floor rooms of number 59. Multiple-occupancy, rented accommodation would explain why this half of the building was never comprehensively updated in the way that 59a was in the 19th century, and why as a consequence so many of the 18th century fixtures and fittings have survived. Albert Edward Hindle, Surgeon, is listed at 59 Highcross Street in 1889-90 and the ground floor of number 59 was still a doctor's surgery in 1958 (see Appendix 1, Figure 5). The chronology of the various later ranges behind number 59 is explained in the Supplementary Statement (Appendix 2).

7. Inventory of Surviving Early Decorative Elements

59 Highcross Street

Ground Floor

- Entrance – Doorway with fanlight over; potential for surviving side-lights behind render (note – set of timber, double doors in loft space correspond with the width of this doorway)
- Entrance hall – Staircase, ceiling cornice (above false ceiling)
- Room 1 – Ceiling cornice (above false ceiling)
- Room 2 – Ceiling cornice (above false ceiling)

First Floor

Room 3 – Door, architrave, skirting, picture rail, hearth
Room 4 – Fire surround, fitted cupboard, skirting, architrave
Room 5 – Door, architrave, skirting
Landing – Cupboard, skirting, cornice

Second Floor

Room 6 – Door, architrave, fire surround, skirting, fitted cupboard
Room 7 – Door, architrave, skirting, fire surround and grate, fitted cupboard.
Room 8 – Door, architrave and overlight, skirting

59a Highcross Street

Entrance hall – Staircase
Flat 1 – Ceiling rose and cornice (above false ceiling)
Flat 2 – Fitted cupboard, rising shutters beneath windows
Flat 3 – Fire surround
Flat 4 – Fire surround, skirting
Flat 5 – None

8. Trade Directories

W. Wight: History, Gazetteer & Directory of Leicestershire & Rutland 1863

Henry Pickering 59 Highcross Street
Chemist & Druggist

Street, Alphabetical & Trade Directory of Leicester 1870

March & Pattison's
Leicester improved Cooking Apparatus (etc – good ad, copy)
Britannia Foundry, St. Peter's Lane, Leicester
Show Rooms 59 Highcross Street

Wright's Directory of Leicester & Six Miles Round 1878

March & Pattison, Iron and Brass Founders, Stove Grate & Range Manufacturers, 59 Highcross Street & 4 St. Peter's Lane
See advert. pp. ii & iii
and
G.H. Jones, Wholesale Ironmongery & Iron Merchant 59 Highcross Street, Leicester
Kitchen ranges, register stoves, and marble chimney pieces

Wright's Directory of Leicestershire and Rutland 1880

March & Pattison's, Leicester, Improved Cooking Apparatus, Show Rooms 59 Highcross Street, Leicester

Wright's Directory of Leicestershire 1887-1888

James Gentle Wheelwright 59 Highcross Street

Wright's Directory of Leicester and Twelve Miles Round 1889-90

Albert Edward Hindle, Surgeon, 59 Highcross Street

Wright's Directory of Leicestershire 1892

Fields & Baum 59 Highcross Street

9. Bibliography

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Eveleigh, D.J., 1983. *Firegrates and Kitchen Ranges* Shire Album 99, Shire Publications Ltd.

Hall, L., 2005. *Period House Fixtures and Fittings 1300-1900*. Countryside Books.

Internet website: historicaldirectories.org

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1996. *Standard and Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Buildings or Structures*.

McWhirr, A., 1997. 'Brickmaking in Leicestershire before 1710' *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* 71, 37-59.

RCHME, 1996. *Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification (third edition)*. London: HMSO.



Plate 1. 59-59a Highcross Street. Looking east



Plate 2. Rear of 59a Highcross Street. Looking south-west.



Plate 3. Room 1, showing staircase and blocked doorway through to Room 9.
Looking north.



Plate 4. 59 Highcross Street, ground floor staircase detail.
Looking east.



Plate 5. 59 Highcross Street, Room 3. Looking north-east.



Plate 6. Room 4, Looking south-west.



Plate 7. First floor landing, showing C19th cupboard and blocked doorway through to 59a Highcross Street. Looking north.



Plate 8. Second floor, Room 6, looking south-west.

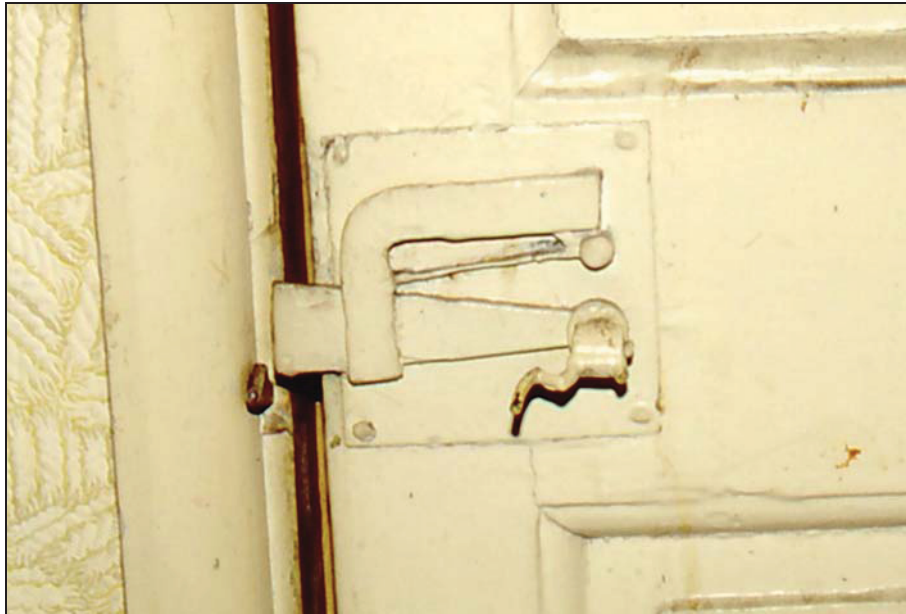


Plate 9. Detail of latch-handle to fitted cupboard, Room 6. Looking south.



Plate 10. Room 7 Bathroom. Looking north.



Plate 11. Room 7 fireplace. Looking west.



Plate 12. Room 7, fitted cupboard. Looking west.



Plate 13. Second floor landing, four-panel door to Room 8, with overlight.
Looking north-west



Plate 14. 59a Highcross Street, Room 10. Showing fitted cupboard and part of fireplace. Photograph taken prior to 1990s flat conversion and supplied by N. Weafer.



Plate 15. Room 11. c. 1910/20 fireplace within chimney stack.
Looking east.



Plate 16. Room 12. Rear of large chimney stack, taken prior to 1990s redevelopment.
Looking south-east. Photograph supplied by N. Weafer.



Plate 17. 59a service staircase, showing position of former 1st floor passage into Room 13. Looking north-west.



Plate 18. 59a Highcross Street. Room 15 fire surround. Possibly relocated here from Room 10 as part of 1990s redevelopment. See Plate 14 above.



Plate 19. Cellar 1, showing stone wall behind plaster-board. Looking west.



Plate 20. Cellar 2. Looking east.



Plate 21. Cellar 3, showing blocked staircase leading up to 59a Highcross Street and blocked doorway through to cellars of number 59 to the left. Looking south.



Plate 22. Cellar 4. Looking south.



Plate 23. Cellar 5. Looking east.



Plate 24: King-post roof structure above Rooms 17 and 18, frontage range. Looking north.



Plate 25: Date inscribed brick '1756', located within north gable-end wall.

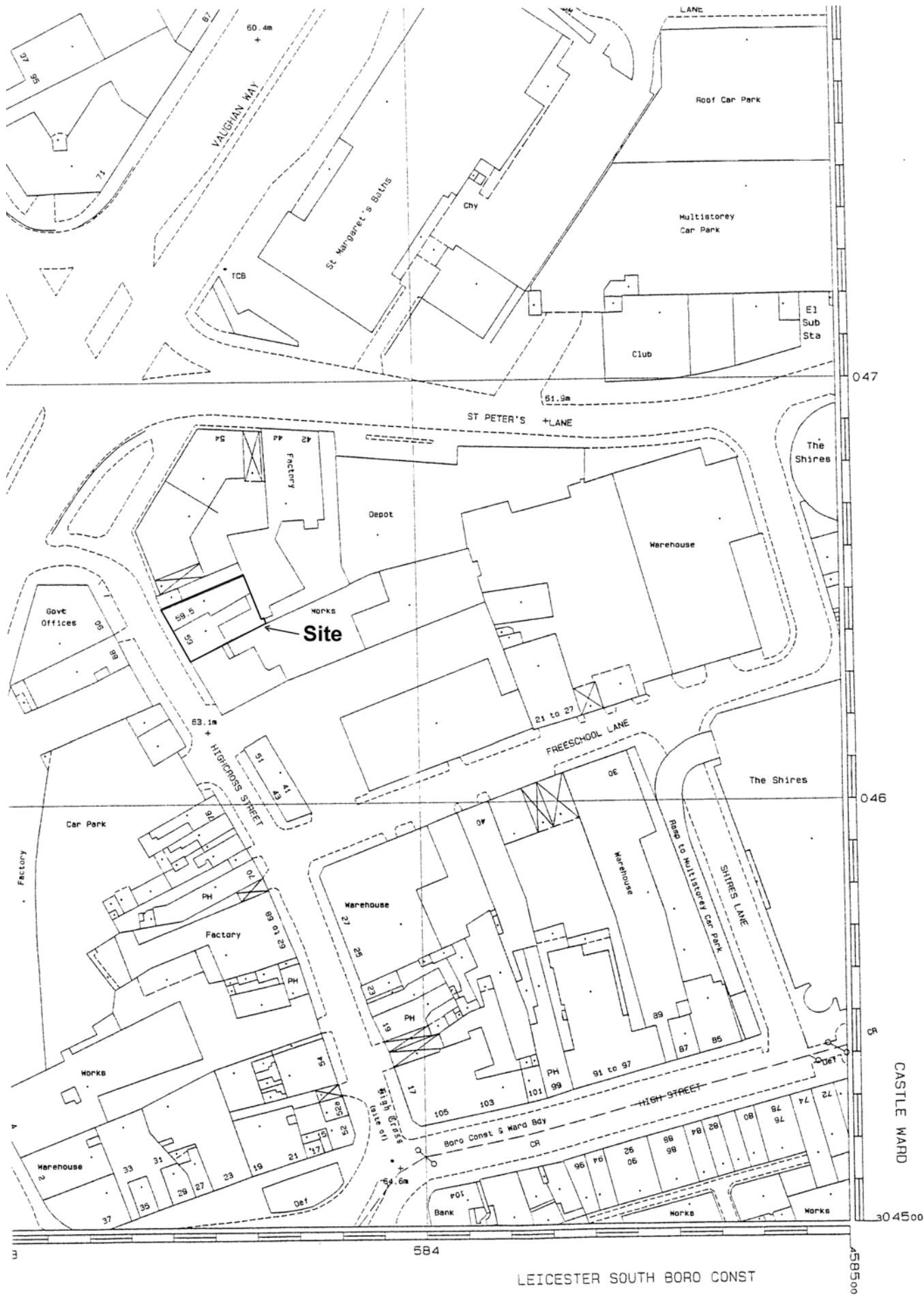


Figure 1. Location Plan. Scale 1:1250. 59-59a Highcross Street Highlighted.
 Based on Ordnance Survey digital mapping. © Crown Copyright. Licence no AL10002186.

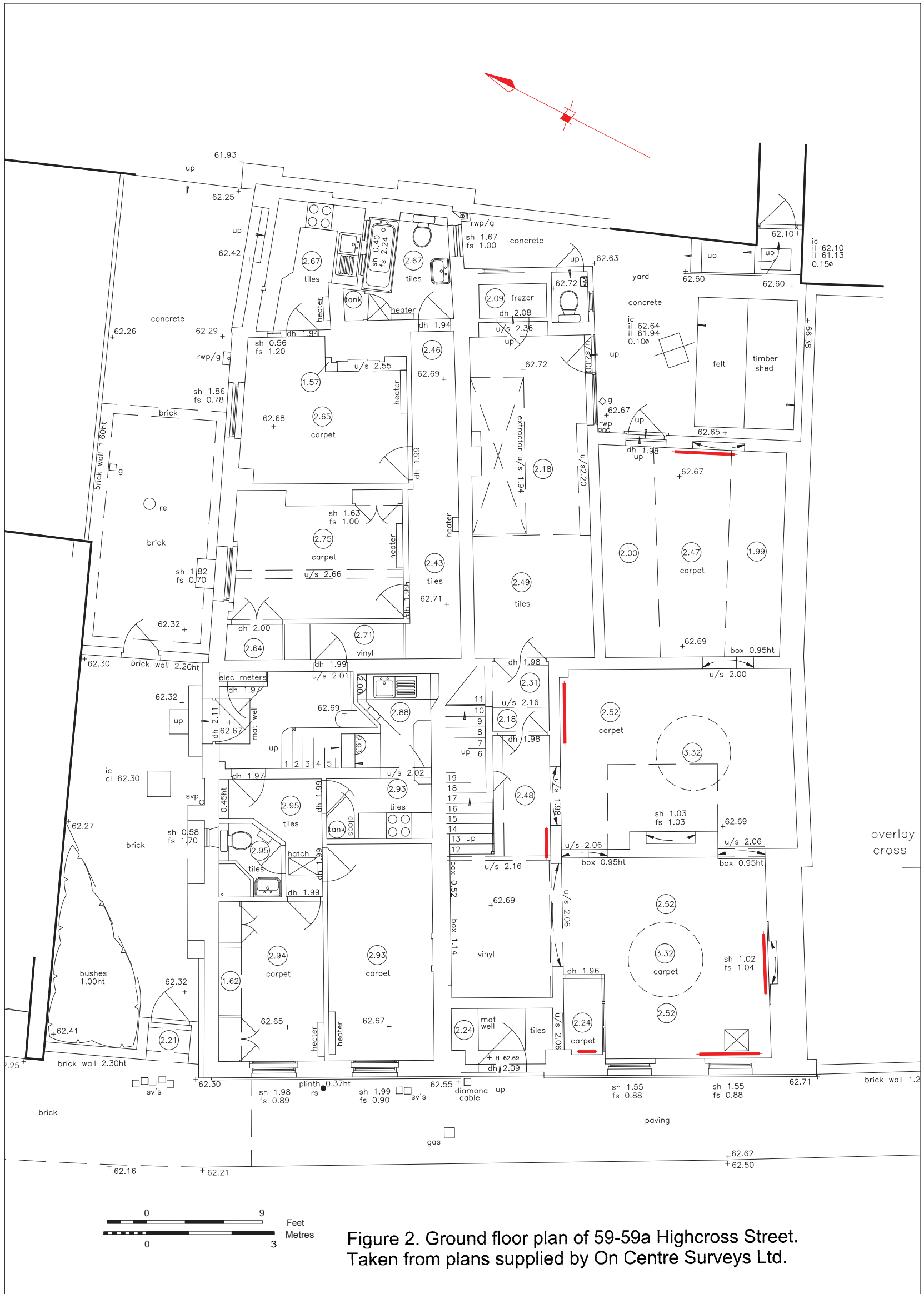


Figure 2. Ground floor plan of 59-59a Highcross Street.
 Taken from plans supplied by On Centre Surveys Ltd.





Figure 4. Second floor plan of 59-59a Highcross Street.
Taken from plans supplied by On Centre Surveys Ltd.

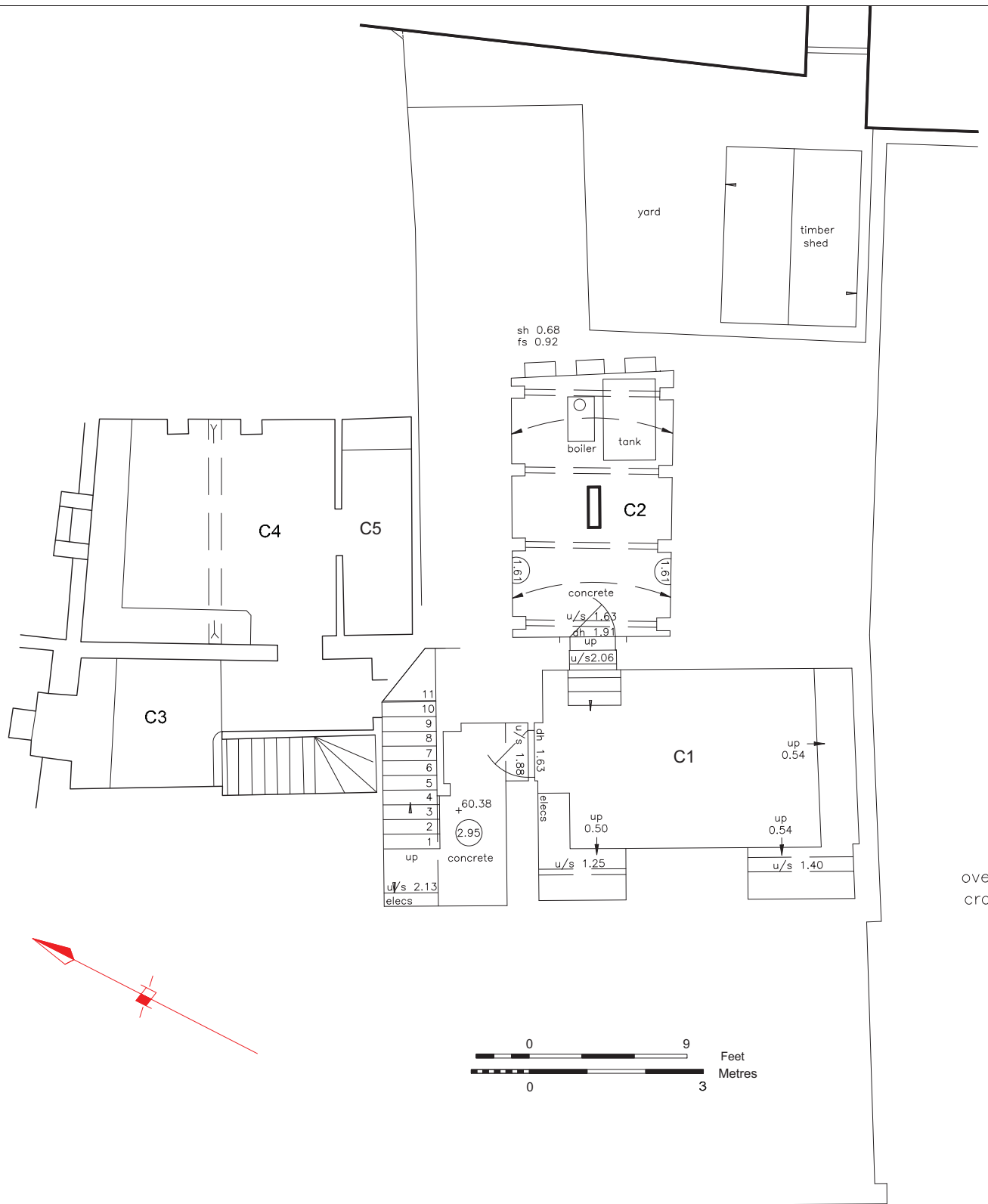


Figure 5. Layout of cellars beneath 59-59a Highcross Street.
 Taken from plans supplied by On Centre Surveys, with C3- C5 added by ULAS.



Figure 6. Ground floor plan omitting late 20th century partition walls.

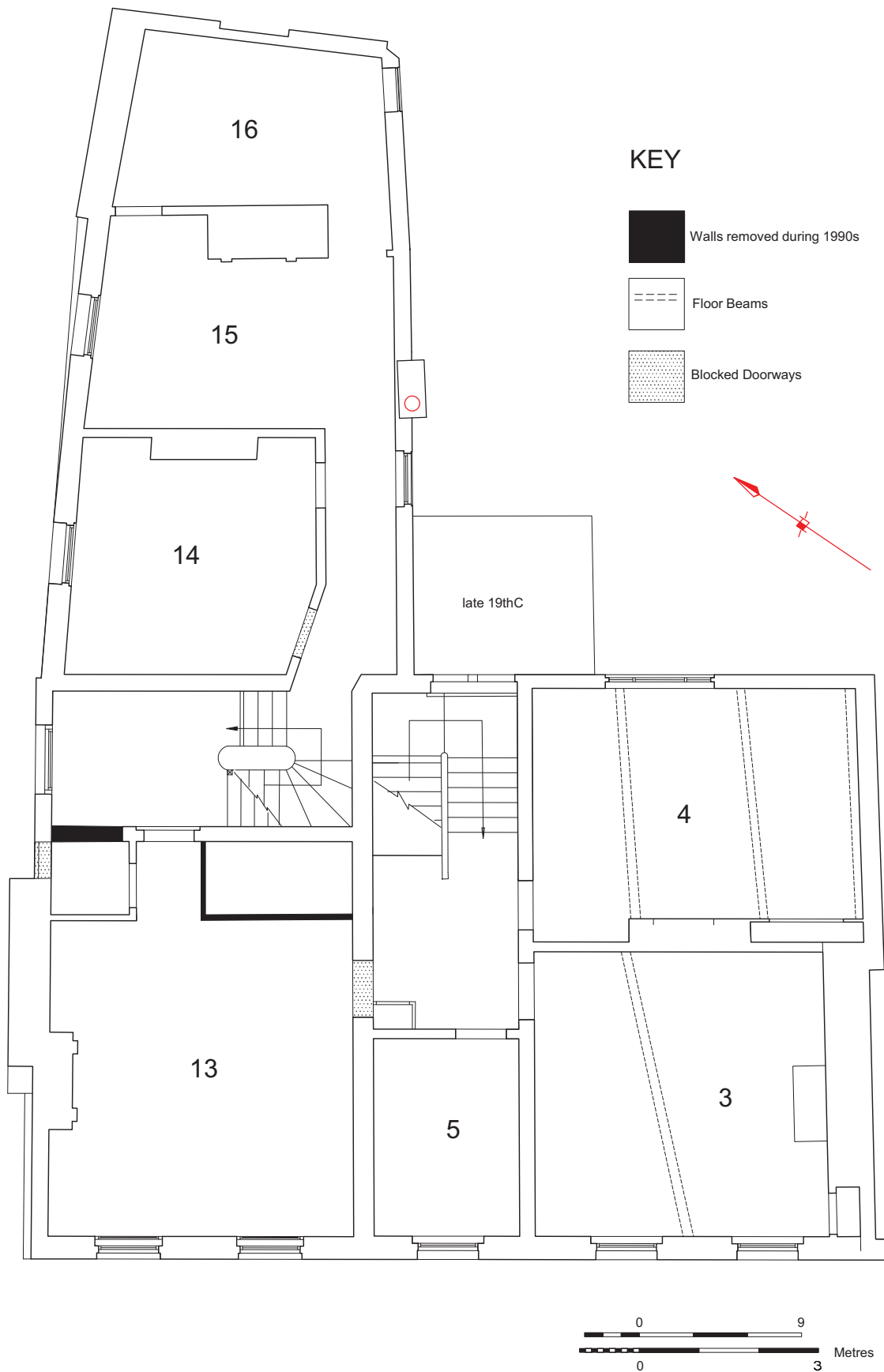


Figure 7. First floor plan omitting late 20th century partition walls.

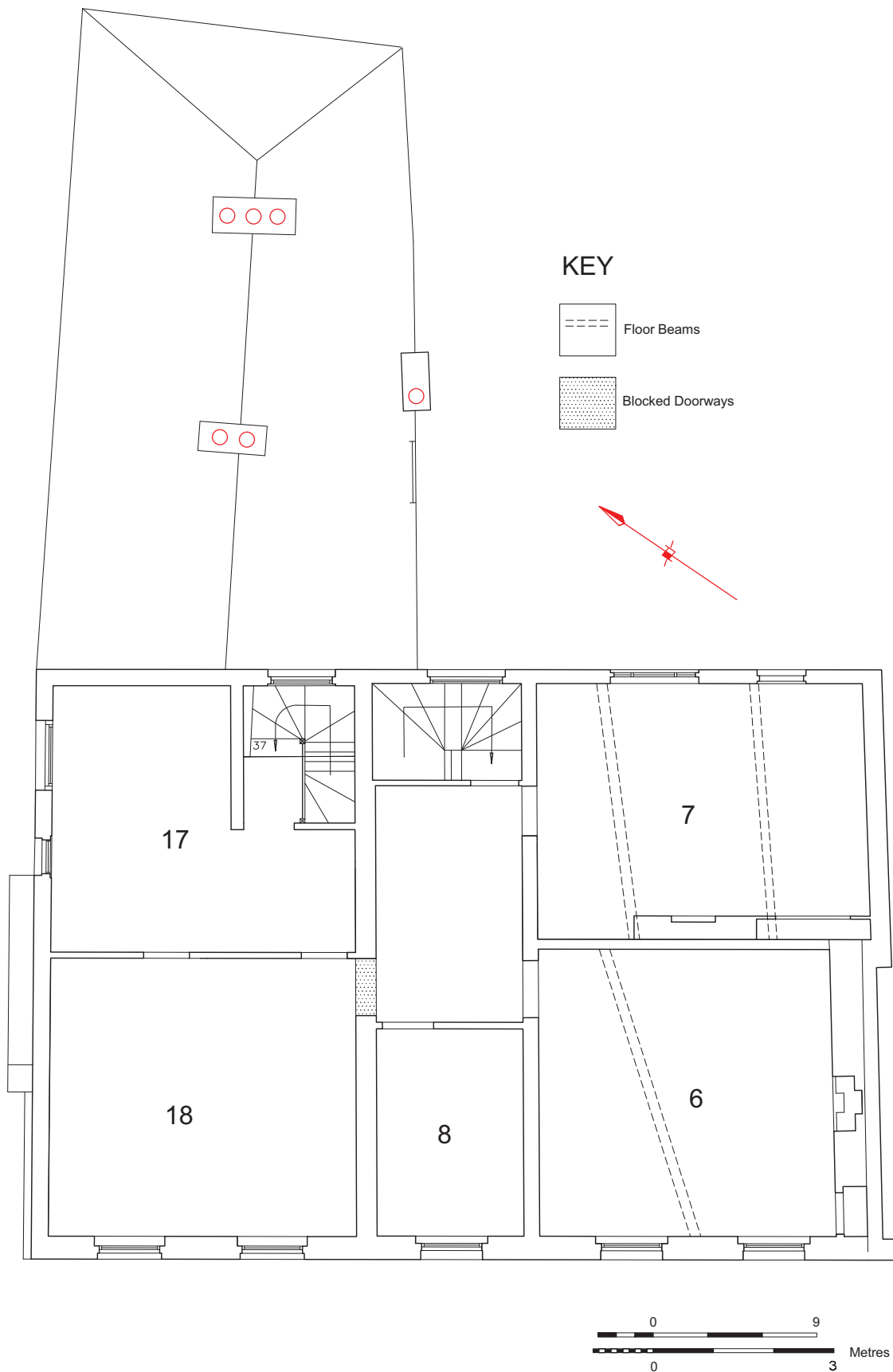


Figure 8. Second floor plan omitting late 20th century partition walls.

Appendix 1

59 & 59½ Highcross Street, Leicester: Historic Building Statement

Introduction

This statement presents the information gathered to date on 59 & 59½ Highcross Street, Leicester. This includes material collated as part of an Appraisal of the Historic Built Environment in the area of the Shires West Development (ULAS Report Number 2003-059); Notes on Buildings of Interest within the application area produced by R Chitham; limited internal inspection of the two properties; and a search of illustrative materials held by the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Record Office (LLRRO).

Description

Number 59/59½ Highcross Street is a Grade II listed mid-18th century building located on the east side of Highcross Street, Leicester at National Grid Reference SK 5835 0464. The listing description is reproduced below; the building lies just outside the High Street conservation area.

The building is a three-storey former town house of substantial proportions, now divided into two properties. The Highcross Street elevation is five sash window bays wide, of red brick with gauged arches, with rendered bands at first and second floor level and a first floor cill level. It has a slightly projecting crowning cornice and frieze band, somewhat small-scaled, and a low parapet above now clad in lead. The central front door, originally flanked by sidelights, has a semi-circular traceried fanlight. The south (right hand) half of the ground floor facade is rendered with two inserted sash windows that are much smaller than those of the rest of the facade. North of the main entrance the ground storey facade (59½) has been reinstated in domestic form within the last decade using reclaimed brickwork and good replica sash windows, replacing a 19th century shop front which is seen in early photographs (Figures 3 & 4). The roof is covered in non-local slate, probably Welsh slate.

It seems reasonable to accept the date of 1756, cut into a brick on the north wall (now moved by the builder, N. Weafer, from its original position at first floor level), as the construction date of the frontage range.

The north wall of the frontage block, including the central stack and entrance door surround to number 59½ is in larger brickwork than the facade and presumably dates to the conversion of the building into two units in the 19th century. As part of this conversion a swept-handrail, cut-string staircase, with carved tread ends and square bar balusters, was inserted, with the effect of confusing the original plan form.

The south gable wall of the frontage block has a modern 'skin' wall reinforcing the brickwork where the adjacent building has been demolished.

There is a rear wing at the north end (part of 59½), the alignment of which is offset from the parent building. There are at least two distinct phases of build in the north flank wall of this rear block, using two different types and sizes of brick. The earliest phase of brickwork appears to be contemporary with the frontage range. Internally, a timber post trapped in the fabric of the north wall hints at an earlier, timber-framed structure subsequently encased or rebuilt in brick; further, intrusive investigation would be required to confirm this, however.

To the rear of number 59 there is a small two-storey 19th century addition and a larger flat-roofed single-storey extension.

Interiors

Number 59 is currently in use as a restaurant; so far it has only been possible to undertake a brief visual inspection of the interior. The ground floor is open plan and the only visible feature is a fine open string staircase with carved tread ends. Modern suspended ceilings on the ground floor may conceal early decorative elements such as cornices. On the first and second floors some original joinery, plasterwork and fireplaces are visible. Modern stud partitions and false ceilings may conceal other original/early features. Number 59 has a brick cellar which was not examined in detail.

Number 59½ has been converted into a series of residential apartments within the last decade; again no more than a brief internal inspection has been possible. Various stud partition walls subdivide the original rooms. It is reported that original/early cornices survive above modern suspended ceilings and some early joinery is evident including a fitted cupboard and rising window shutter in one of the ground floor rooms of the back range. There are early fire surrounds on the ground and first floors; the staircase is noted above. Various details suggest a phase of refurbishment in the early to mid 19th century, presumably associated with the subdivision of the property into two separate holdings (certainly before 1885, based on the evidence of the First Edition Ordnance Survey map).

Listing Description

Highcross Street, No.59:

Grade: II

Date Listed: 05/01/1950

Conservation Area: None

Reference number: 7/119

Large house of late C18. Red brick. Painted stone bands, sills and moulded eaves cornice. Slate roof with gabled ends. Three storeys. Five windows, flat brick arches, sashes with glazing bars. Stuccoed ground floor, one window right-hand, much altered shop front left-hand with flat pilasters. Central panelled door with bricked-in side panels under very large semi-circular traceried fanlight.

Documentary Assessment

A full documentary assessment has not been undertaken at this stage, although a search of illustrative material (photographs/topographic drawings etc.) held by the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Records Office (LLRRO) has been made. Other possible sources of information include trade/commercial directories and deeds.

Photographs of the building in the LLRRO collections are catalogued below. These indicate that a chemists shop occupied the ground floor of 59½ in the late-19th century (Figures 3 & 4). The signage states that the business was established in 1830, though whether at these premises is uncertain at this stage; trade directories may clarify this point. The same shop front, somewhat altered, appears in a photograph of 1958 (Figure 5) and survived in a dilapidated state until its removal as part of the recent refurbishment of this property. Figure

In the photographs of *c.*1877 (Figures 3 & 4) the areas on either side of the main door, presumably originally glazed sidelights, are timber panelled. A boot scraper is located to the left of the door. The same timber panelling is evident in the 1958 photograph (Figure 5). In

the same photograph it is seen that the southernmost ground floor window had been converted into a doorway (in the 19th century by the look of the door) giving access to a doctor's surgery. Trade directories may again provide some indication of how long this business had operated from these premises.

Photographs in the LLRRO Collections

The Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Records Office (LLRRO) photographic collections include three photographs of the building. Two of these date to the late 19th century and one to the mid 20th century.

DE3736 Box 17 Folder 3: High Cross Street General – pre 1945

1. Highcross St. 61[21] (Reproduced here as Figure 3)

Photograph of northern section of building ie. 59½ Highcross Street.

Annotated on reverse:
59 Highcross Street Leicester
c. 1877

Shows 19th century shopfront of H. Pickering Chemist, established 1830. Stall boards bear legends: *Medical galvanic apparatus* and *Photographic apparatus*

2. [21] (Reproduced here as Figure 4)

Similar photograph to above, though not identical; woman standing in shop doorway and child looking in window. Shows a little more of main doorway and fanlight.

Annotated on reverse:

Henry Pickering
Chemist
61 Highcross Street, Leicester
Wright's Directory 1884
Donor Mr. P.A. Sloane
Foxton Lodge, Foxton

DE3736 Box 17 Folder 4: High Cross Street General – post 1945

3. [20] (Reproduced here as Figure 5)

Annotated on reverse:
18th century house Highcross Street [20]
Leicester Highcross Street
1958
No. 59 & 59½
Church & Sons (plastic envelope says Clarke & Sons, but last 2 letters over shop front of 59½ are clearly ...ch – check trade directories)
Doctors (Dr Adams)
Etc

This shows the main doorway and right hand (south) part of 59 Highcross Street, plus part of shopfront to left (ie 59½).

To the right of the main door is a window similar to those on the first floor and to the right of this a panelled and glazed door. This is presumably a later insertion – door and plain overlight look 19th century. The shopfront to the left is that in the 19th century photos (see above), but modified.

17 November 2004

Neil Finn
Project Officer
University of Leicester Archaeological Services



Figure 1: Grade II listed No.59 Highcross Street. Note the 'skin' wall against the southern gable end.



Figure 2: General view of No.59 Highcross Street.



Figure 3. 59½ Highcross Street c. 1877.



Figure 4. 59½ Highcross Street, late 19th century.



Figure 5. 59 Highcross Street, 1958.

Appendix 2

Supplementary Historic Building Statement on The Rear Range of 59 Highcross Street, Leicester

This statement has been prepared following a visual inspection of the exterior of the rear range of 59 Highcross Street on 26.01.2005, and consideration of historic map evidence and existing floor plans of the building.

Three distinct structural elements are apparent from the external inspection (excluding a free-standing timber shed against the southern boundary wall of the property which is very recent in date and will not receive further consideration) (Figure 6). The earliest element is a small two-storey brick-built block with Welsh slate roof, on the north side of the plot (Figures 1 & 4, and outlined in green on Figure 6). This has a single first floor window with brick segmental arch head in the east gable wall. The ground floor forms part of the kitchen to the Rajah restaurant and is open into an adjacent single-storey range to the east (see below). Female and male toilets occupy the first floor. Access to the first floor is via an inserted doorway on the half landing of the 18th century frontage range; an original window opening was modified to form the doorway. This block was probably constructed in the latter half of the 19th century, certainly before 1895 as it appears on a Goad fire insurance plan of that year (LLRRO DE4702/14/2; Figure 4).

To the east of the two-storey range described above is a single-storey brick-built block with flat roof, mainly occupied by the restaurant kitchen. Beyond the kitchen area, towards the rear of the plot, is a toilet with separate access from the yard (Figure 3, outlined in blue on Figure 6). There are several distinct phases of brickwork in the south wall of this block. The earliest brickwork is in the lower section of the toilet. The toilet block was extant by 1895 and appears on the Goad fire insurance plan of that year (LLRRO DE4702/14/2), located to the rear of a single-storey range of similar plan form to the extant block (Figure 4). However, the brickwork of the south wall between the toilet area and the two-storey range is comparatively recent, certainly attributable to the second half of the 20th century and very probably the last quarter of that century (Figure 3).

Occupying the southern part of the plot is a large single-storey flat-roofed range (outlined in orange on Figure 6). The brickwork of the east (rear) elevation is again attributable to the second half of the 20th century, and in all probability the last two or three decades (Figure 2). This range does not appear on a fire insurance plan of 1961 (LLRRO DE4702/15/2; Figure 5). The thickness of the south wall of this block suggests that it was constructed inside the line of the southern boundary wall to the property.

Ordnance Survey map evidence has been of little use in establishing the development sequence of the property. The earliest large-scale map, the First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:500 sheet XXXI.10.24 (surveyed 1885, published 1887), shows nothing to the rear of the 18th century frontage range of number 59. Subsequent OS editions of 1904 (1:2500), 1915 (1:2500), 1930 (1:2500) and 1938 (1:10,560) show a similar arrangement. Ordnance Survey editions from 1971 onwards show the boundary between this property and 59½ more accurately than earlier maps, but still do not show any building to the rear of the frontage block of number 59. As recently as 1997 OS digital survey data shows no additions behind the frontage range of number 59.

Summary Statement

The range to the rear of number 59 Highcross Street includes several distinct elements, built at various times. The earliest elements are the two-storey range and the toilet block towards

the rear of the property, which are attributable to the latter half of the 19th century; both were certainly extant by 1895. The single-storey range between may also include some elements of 19th century fabric, but has been extensively rebuilt comparatively recently. The large single-storey block on the south side of the plot was constructed some time after 1961.

Judging by the internal layout shown on the On Centre survey, and as a result of the external inspection, it is clear that the earliest elements of the rear range of number 59 have been extensively altered to suit their current usage as service areas of a restaurant. It is unlikely that significant historic or architectural details survive internally within these areas.

This report supplements an earlier Historic Building Statement prepared by University of Leicester Archaeological Services for 59 & 59 ½ Highcross Street, Leicester, dated 17th November 2004.

Neil Finn
Project Officer
University of Leicester Archaeological Services
30th January 2005

Illustrations



Figure 1. Rear of 59 Highcross Street showing the first floor section of the 19th century two-storey range (behind extractor ducting).



Figure 2. Rear of 59 Highcross Street showing the late 20th century single storey flat roofed range (centre of frame).



Figure 3. Rear of 59 Highcross Street showing (on right) single storey flat roofed range on north side of plot. In the lower right corner of the frame is the 19th century toilet block.

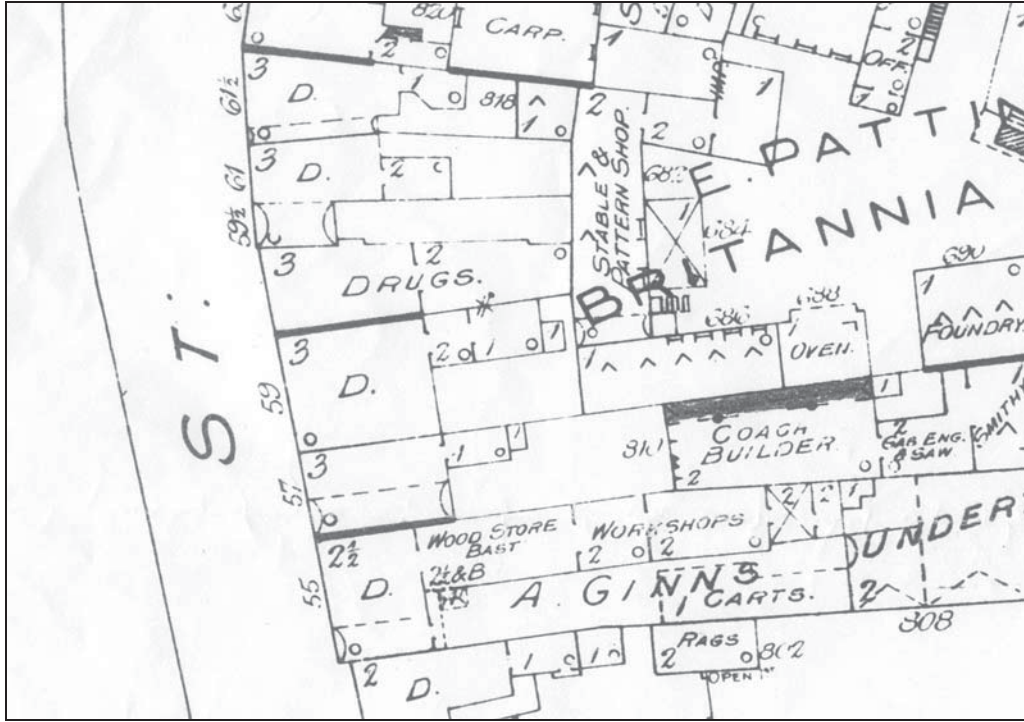
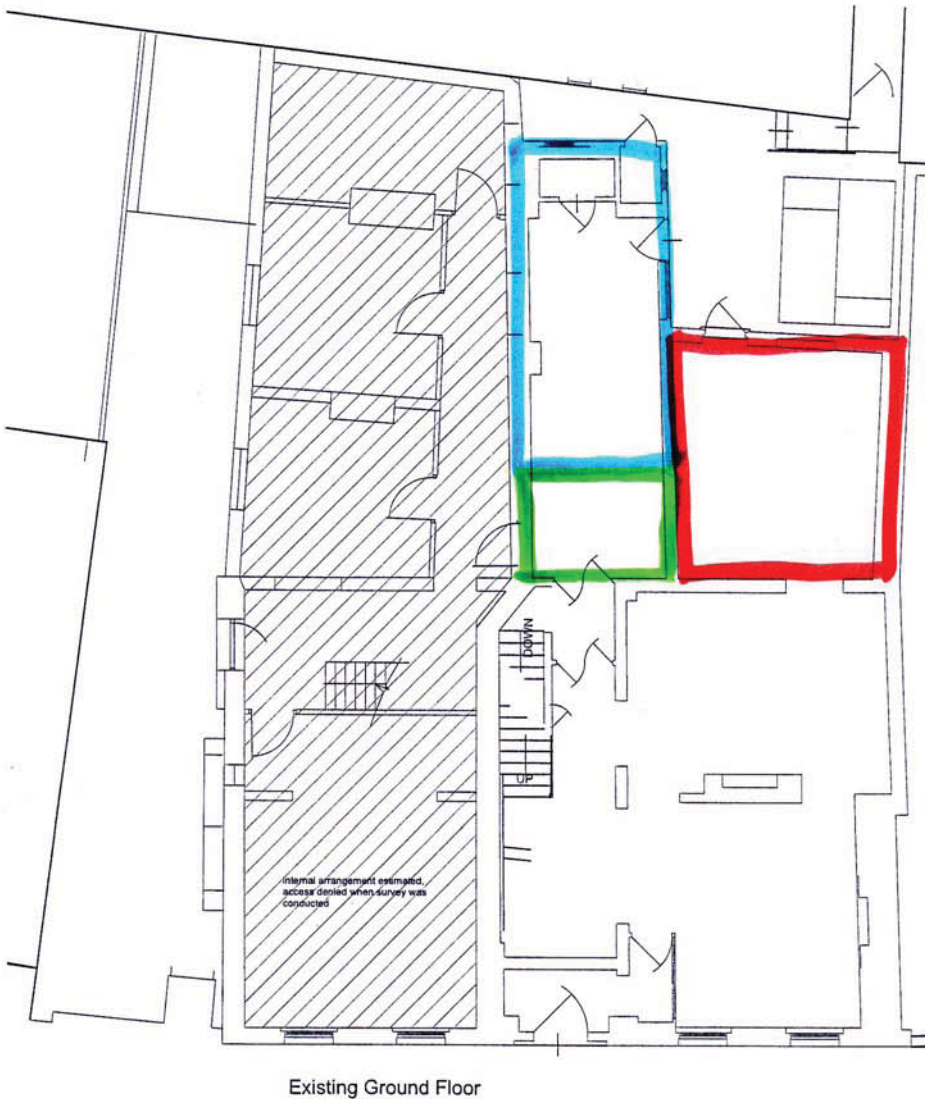


Figure 4. Extract from 1895 Goad fire insurance plan (LLRRO ref: DE4702/14/2) showing one and two storey ranges to the rear of 59 Highcross Street.



Figure 5. Extract from 1961 Goad fire insurance plan (LLRRO ref: DE4702/15/2) indicating that the large single-storey block on the south side of the plot was not extant by that date.



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Project:
 95008
 The Shires West
 59 & 59.5 Highcross Street
 Leicester

Sheet title:
 Existing Basement and Ground Floor

Scale:
 1:50 @ A1

Ref:
 95008.018

Date:
 29.09.04

Drawn:

Checked:

All approvals on the drawings to date. Do not issue off drawings.
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Key:




-  Two-storey block: 2nd half of 19th century
-  Single-storey block: 2nd half of 19th century, partly rebuilt late 20th century
-  Single storey block: late 20th century (post-1960)

Figure 6. Ground Floor Plan of 59 and 59½ Highcross Street illustrating the three distinct structural elements to the rear range of number 59. North to left of page (approx.).