



University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

An Historic Building Recording
(photographic survey) at
53 Oxford Street,
Leicester

NGR: SK 5856 0393

Andrew Hyam



ULAS Report No. 2015-088
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**An Historic Building Recording
(photographic survey) at**

53 Oxford Street,

Leicester


NGR: SK 5856 0393

A R Hyam

For: Evans Heritage Developments

Approved by

Signed:



Date: 18 May 2015

Name: R.J. Buckley.

University of Leicester

Archaeological Services

University Rd., Leicester, LE1 7RH

Tel: (0116) 2522848 Fax: (0116) 2522614

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An Historic Building Recording (photographic survey) at 53 Oxford Street, Leicester.

NGR: SK 5856 0393

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Summary

An historic building recording (photographic survey) was undertaken by the University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) at 53 Oxford Street, Leicester between the 5th and the 8th of May 2015. The survey studied the redundant former hosiery factory which dates to the late 19th century. The building appears to be of a single phase with little modification since construction. The building is included in the Local Heritage Asset Register (LCC 2014, LL/121).

Permission has been applied for to demolish the building and construct an eight-storey student accommodation block over the footprint of this building and on land to the rear.

The report and archive will be deposited with Leicester Museums under Accession Number A9.2015

Introduction

In accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 *Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment* this document forms the report for an historic building survey (photographic survey) at 53 Oxford Street, Leicester, NGR SK 5856 0393. Historic building surveys are defined in the English Heritage guidance document – *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2006). Under planning application number 20140961 Evans Heritage Developments intend to demolish the building currently at Number 53 and construct an eight-storey student flat development over the footprint of the building and on adjacent open land to the south and west.

Historic mapping analysis shows that the former hosiery factory was built in the late 19th or very early 20th century. Such structures are a rapidly diminishing resource and the Conservation Officer, Leicester City Council has recommended an Historic Building Photographic Survey of the historic structure to be demolished prior to the redevelopment works commencing. The building is included in the Leicester City Council Local Heritage Asset Register (LCC 2014, LL/121).

The building at 53 Oxford Street lies within a triangle of land between Oxford Street (A594), to the north, and Grange Lane, to the south (Fig. 1 and appendix 1). The building lies on the southern side of Oxford Street with open ground extending back towards Grange Lane. Until recently the open ground held more factory buildings which have now been demolished. Much of the surrounding area has been redeveloped for student accommodation which serves the nearby De Montfort University.



Figure 1 Location of site
Circle shows building location

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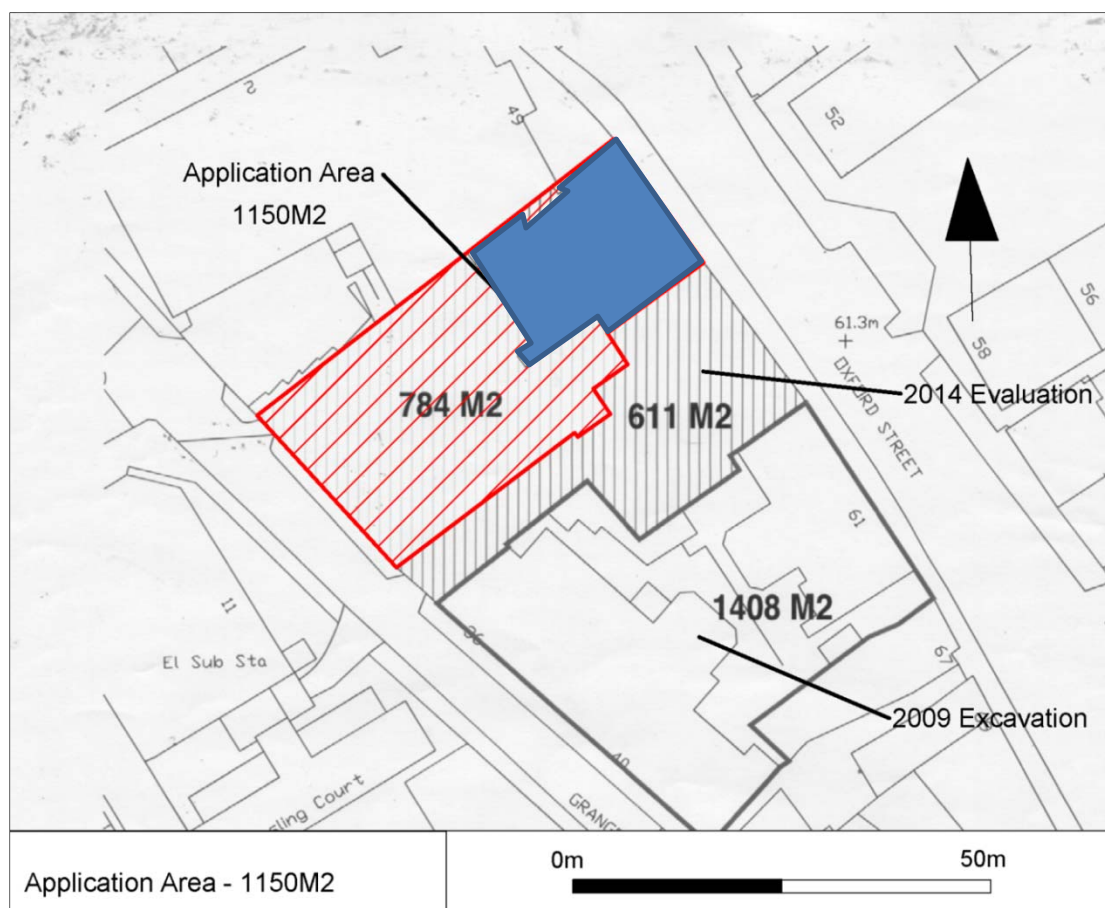


Figure 2 Site location

Building highlighted in blue, open development areas shaded in red and grey

Background

The hosiery industry, and to a lesser extent the boot and shoe industry, formed the backbone of Leicester's industrial strength from the mid-19th century through to its eventual decline in the 1980s and 1990s. The virtual death of this industry has led to a large number of redundant hosiery factories throughout the city and many have either been demolished or redeveloped. The area around Oxford Street and Grange Lane was until quite recently a typical example of Leicester's industrial townscape with a number of factories forming the majority of buildings. Redevelopment of the area, especially around De Montfort University, has more recently changed this and a number of student accommodation blocks have replaced the older buildings.

Because of the gradual loss of the former factory buildings the remaining structures are now seen as a diminishing resource. As such the Leicester City Council has placed 53 Oxford Street on the Local Heritage Asset Register (LCC 2014, LL/121). Therefore the Conservation Officer, Leicester City Council has recommended that prior to any redevelopment work and demolition an Historic Building recording in the form of a photographic survey take place.

Map regression analysis indicates that the factory was built at the end of the 19th century. The first edition Ordnance Survey County Series map of 1888 shows a

building on the same site but this has a slightly different footprint. The Second Edition however, published in 1904, shows the building as it survives to the present. Subsequent editions show a gradual increase of buildings attached to the south and west which eventually cover the whole of the application area. All of these additional buildings have now been demolished leaving a number of scars on the walls of the original building.

Objectives

The purpose of the work is to record and advance understanding of the significance of the affected heritage asset:

The objectives of the Historic Building Recording programme are:

- To provide a written, drawn and photographic record of all the buildings on site prior to the commencement of works.
- To ensure the long-term preservation of the information through deposition of the record and a summary written report with an appropriate depository.

Methodology

All work followed 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*.

- English Heritage's guidelines *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (2006) has been used as the basis for the methodology.
- The site-based element of the Historic Building Recording programme involved the compilation of photographic and written records. A summary report, suitably illustrated and incorporating relevant background research to place the site into context has been prepared.
- An ordered archive has been compiled for deposition with an appropriate body and an Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) record completed.

The written component of the report should include:

- The precise location of the building, by name or street number, civil parish, town etc and National Grid Reference.
- A note on any statutory or non-statutory designations
- The date the record was made, the names of the recorders, and the location of project archive
- A summary of the building's type or purpose, historically and at present, its materials and possible date (s), materials and possible dates of construction and alteration.

- Where appropriate, a note of the building's past and present relationship to its setting: for example, its relationship to local settlement patterns, to a field system to a park, garden, moat, graveyard or other man-made landscape; its part in a larger architectural or functional group of buildings; its visual importance as a landmark etc.
- A table of contents and list of figures or illustrations
- A gazetteer of photographs taken (this should list the photographs by format and subject). including thumbnail images.
- Full bibliographic and other references, or a list of sources consulted.

The photographic component of the report should include:

Digital colour photographs and black and white 35mm photographs and were taken throughout the survey. Notes and sketches were also made to assist the photographic survey. The specific levels of detail used in the survey followed the guidelines laid down in the RCHME (1996) and English Heritage (2006) specification for photography, which are:

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: 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.

The drawn component of the report should include:

No measured floor plan survey of the buildings existed prior to the survey. A rapid plan of each floor was made during the survey for the purposes of photograph locations appendix.

The drawn record will comprise:

- Site location plans at suitable scales indicating the position of the site within the county and a clear plan of the precise location/outline of the building(s) i.e. 1:1250.
- Plans indicating the position and orientation of photographs/images included in the report.

Results

Key digital photographs are shown in the body of this report with a gazetteer, location plan and contact sheet of all photographs taken being included in the appendices of this report.

Number 53 Oxford Street is a red brick and slate structure and consists of three main elements. The north east facing range fronting onto Oxford Street has three stories and a basement, a short cross range of two stories plus basement connects with a rear range also of two stories plus a basement (see Appendix 1 for building plans). A small enclosed yard fills the space between the three ranges. Externally the building appears to be of a single phase although numerous scars can be seen around the southern, eastern and western elevations where later buildings have been added and subsequently demolished. No internal fixtures and fittings survive from its life as a hosiery factory. The building is in a generally good condition both inside and out.

External views

North-east facing elevation

The north-east facing elevation fronts onto Oxford Street and has four main bays with a fifth narrow bay at its eastern end (Figs. 3, 4 and 5). A raised parapet hides the roof and eaves to create a much larger and imposing frontage. A large set of double gates leads into the enclosed courtyard mentioned above. To the east of the gates is a small doorway leading into a single room office which was not accessible for photography during the survey (Fig. 6). Inspection through the window showed this to be an empty room. The narrow bay on the western end has a set of narrow double doors leading into the entrance hall and main staircase (Fig. 7). Large iron-framed windows let in the maximum amount of light on all floors (Fig. 8). The basement windows are protected by low cast-iron railings and have cast-iron lintels (Fig. 9).

The elevation has a number of decorative touches including decorative limestone string courses, limestone keystones above the first floor windows which also have decorative brick arches, dentil work below the parapet and glazed brown bricks from street level up to the top of the semi-basement windows.

North-west facing elevation

A modern building obscures the rear portion of the north-west facing elevation, however the front range shows that the flat gable end has been partially rendered to cover over earlier building scars (Fig. 10). There is no evidence of any blocked windows where the wall has not been rendered.

South-east facing elevation

The south-east facing elevation of the front range shows the scar of a two, possibly three, storey building which has now been demolished (Fig. 11). The building appears to have been built against Number 53. At ground floor level the demolished building appears to have incorporated the gable end of a Dane Hills sandstone built single-

storey building with the remains of a possible fireplace in evidence (Fig. 12). The front range is slightly thinner at this end in order to create a slightly larger courtyard.

To the south of the front range a two-storey height wall encloses the courtyard. The interior of the courtyard is discussed in more detail below. The flat gable end of the south range extends beyond the courtyard wall. Once again there are numerous building scars where other structures were attached (Fig. 13). The ground level around the south range reduces to such an extent that the basement is at ground level. A toilet block at each floor is attached to the south corner of the range and appears to be part of the original design.

South west facing elevation

The south facing elevation faces the area of the site where a number of former buildings have been demolished (Fig. 14). This range has two storeys plus the basement. The basement has had its windows bricked up and the white painted wall suggests that a single storey structure was attached at this point (Fig. 15). There are also two inserted and now blocked doors at basement level. The windows on this elevation are metal-framed and not as ornate as on the front range. At the east end a number of windows have been modified into doorways on the two upper floors. These may have acted as fire escapes but are now blocked.



Figure 3 North-east facing elevation onto Oxford Street
Looking south-west



Figure 4 North east and south east facing elevations
Looking west towards junction with Bonners Lane. Note building scars and rear range



Figure 5 North east and north-west facing elevations
Looking south east



Figure 6 Office door detail, north-east facing elevation



Figure 7 Main doors to factory and stairs



Figure 8 North east facing elevation window detail
Note decorative brickwork below stone sill



Figure 9 North-east facing elevation basement window detail
Note glazed bricks either side of window



Figure 10 North west facing elevation
Looking south east. Note parapet facing onto Oxford Street



Figure 11 South-western facing elevation
Looking north-east. Oxford Street on right of photograph



Figure 12 Scar of stone building on south west facing elevation
Looking north-east. 1m scale



Figure 13 South-west and south-east facing elevations
Looking north. Note retaining wall on right of photograph showing difference in
ground levels



Figure 14 South-west facing elevation
Looking north-east



Figure 15 South-west facing elevation basement wall
Looking north-east. 1m scale. Note blocked windows

Inside

Basement

The basement below the front range is reached by a set of stairs in the north corner (Fig. 16). These stairs also lead up to the top, 2nd, floor. The front basement only extends as far as the two easternmost bays and does not go under the courtyard doorway or the isolated office mentioned above. A lift shaft, which appears to be original, is located in the middle of the front basement (Fig. 17). Modern hydraulic apparatus is housed in a small inserted structure to the north of the lift shaft. The lift has a Gimsons maker's label on it. The front basement has two metal framed windows with flat lintels showing that it is only partially below ground (Fig. 18). Below the windows is the heating and boiler apparatus made by Witter & Son of Bolton (Fig. 19). The cross range leading to the south range has metal-framed windows and has a ceiling supported by cast-iron columns. The columns, and all columns in the building bear the name of S. Wright Leicester on them (Fig. 20).

The south range ceiling is supported by four cast-iron columns (Figs. 21, 22 and 23). The floor has brick or quarry tiles in contrast to the concrete floor of the front range. The blocked windows and doors discussed above can be seen on the south west wall. Two windows in the north west corner let in light from a small light-well/courtyard which is on the western side of the cross range. At the south eastern end of the basement a dividing wall creates a corridor leading to a set of fire escape stairs in the north east corner of the range. The stairs lead up to the enclosed courtyard and then continue up to the ground floor. Another set of stairs in the middle of the north wall lead up to the first floor. There is no internal access to the south eastern corner toilet block.



Figure 16 Main stairs to basement
Looking south west. 1m scale



Figure 17 Front range basement
Looking north east



Figure 18 Front basement window
Looking north-east. 1m scale



Figure 19 Heating apparatus, front range basement
Looking north east. 1m scale

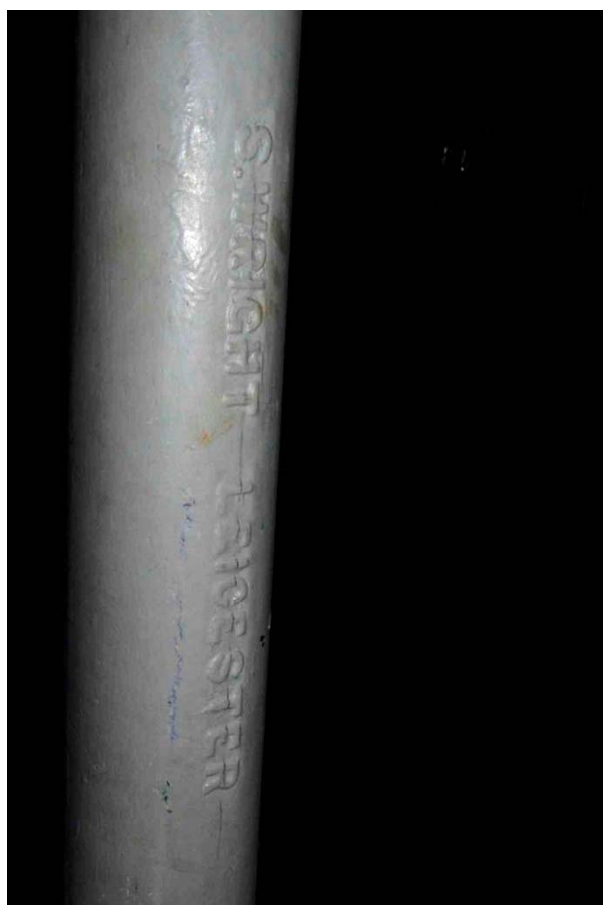


Figure 20 Maker's name on column



Figure 21 South range basement
Looking east



Figure 22 South range basement
Looking south east. 1m scale



Figure 23 South range basement
Looking north west. 1m scale

Ground Floor

The ground floor entrance hall is entered from Oxford Street through two quite narrow doors. The hall is relatively small and cramped (Figs. 24 and 25). A concrete staircase leads up to the floors above and has a metal bannister and decorative metal newel post. On the western side of the doorway is more heating equipment made by Witter and Son and a row of four pressure gauges (Fig. 26). Two gauges are by Witter and two are by Mather and Platt. A window at the south west end of the hall looks out into the lightwell/courtyard which has no access (Fig. 27).

An inserted plasterboard wall and doorway leads into the front range which has been subdivided into a number of small offices by the addition of more plasterboard walls (Fig. 28). The large front windows dominate the small offices (Fig. 29). The range at this point is cut short by the presence of the goods entrance from Oxford Street. As noted earlier no access could be gained to photograph the end office although cursory inspection through the window showed this to be an empty room. Two cast-iron columns have been incorporated into the subdivided offices which continue along the cross range either side of a narrow corridor (Fig. 30). A safe in one of the offices has a maker's plaque of A Webley and Co West Bromwich. Toilets have been built into the western offices and have metal-framed windows (Fig. 31).

The south range is an open space with four cast-iron columns supporting the ceiling and floor above (Figs. 32 and 33). The western end wall has three flat headed windows which have been bricked up. Metal-framed windows run along the southern wall and in the north eastern corner (Fig. 34). Also in the north east corner is a wooden cover for the stairs below which consists of a stepped structure which appears to be a later addition as it partially cuts one of the windows (see Fig. 34). Doors on the

north wall lead to two sets of stairs; the eastern set go down to the fire escape doors and the basement, the central stairs go down to the basement and up to the first floor.



Figure 24 Ground floor entrance hall
Looking south west. 1m scale

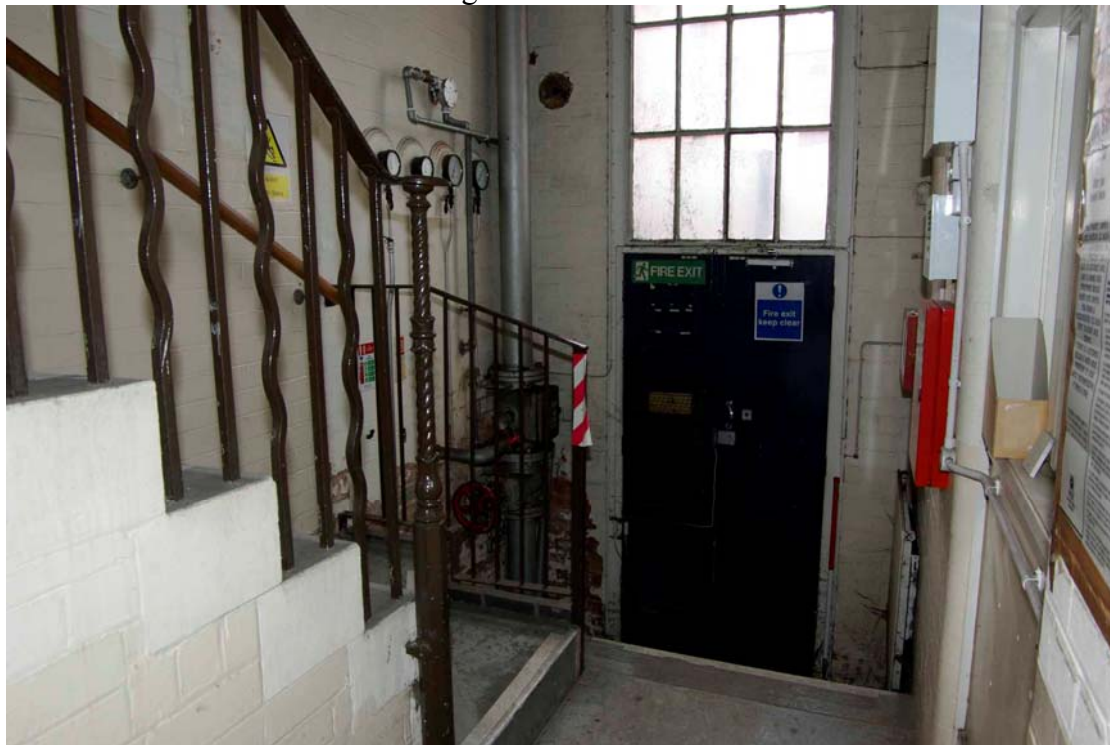


Figure 25 Ground floor entrance hall
Looking north east. 1m scale

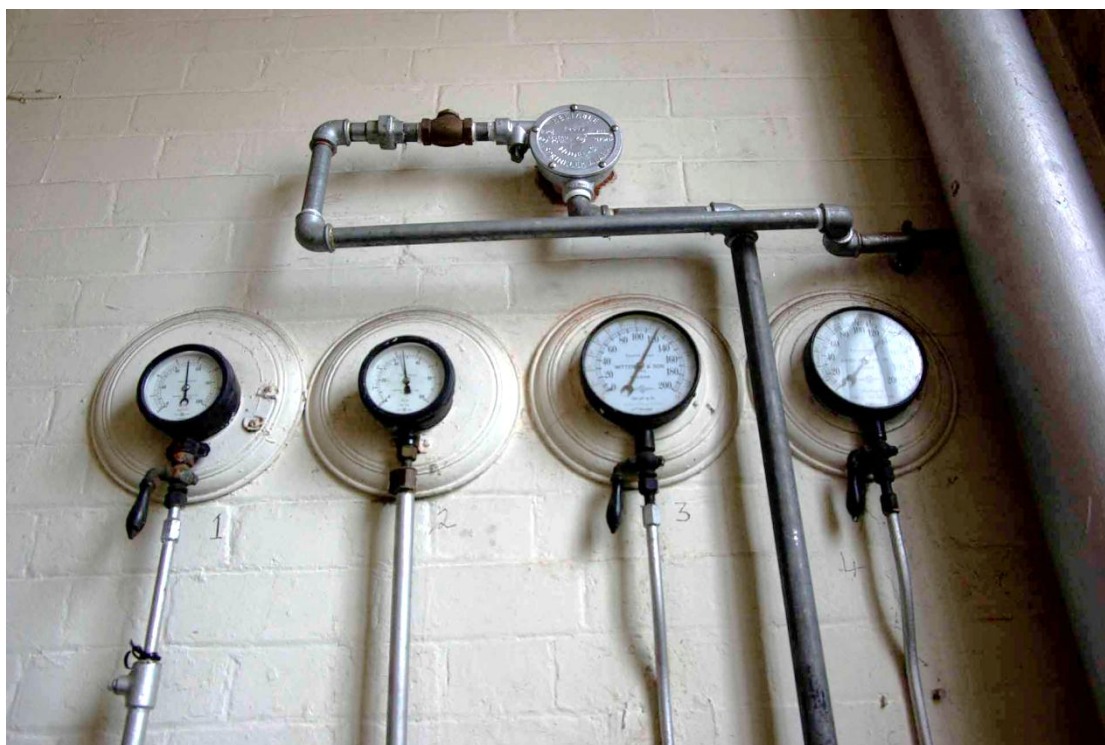


Figure 26 Gauges in entrance hall
Looking north west



Figure 27 Lightwell/courtyard on west side of building
Looking south west towards south range (taken through glass)

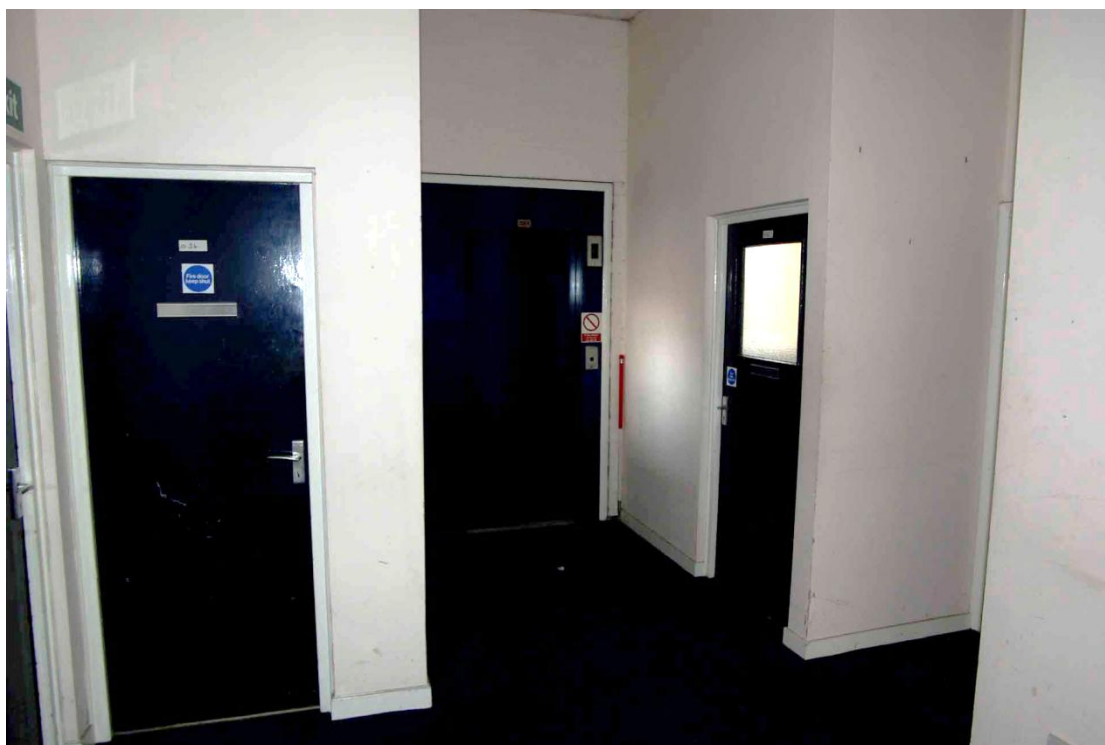


Figure 28 Subdivided offices in front range
Looking south east. Lift shaft door in centre. 1m scale



Figure 29 Front range window detail
Looking north. 1m scale



Figure 30 Office in cross range with column
Looking north. 1m scale



Figure 31 Cross range window detail
Looking west

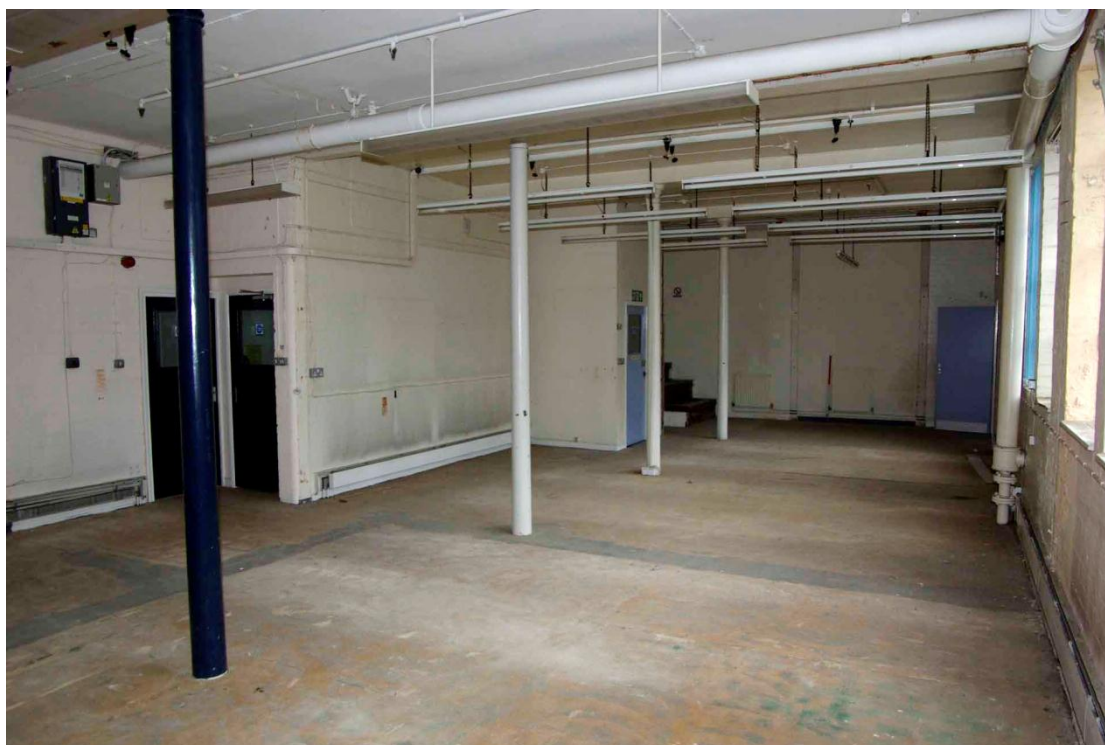


Figure 32 Ground floor south range
Looking north east. 1m scale



Figure 33 Ground floor south range
Looking north west. 1m scale

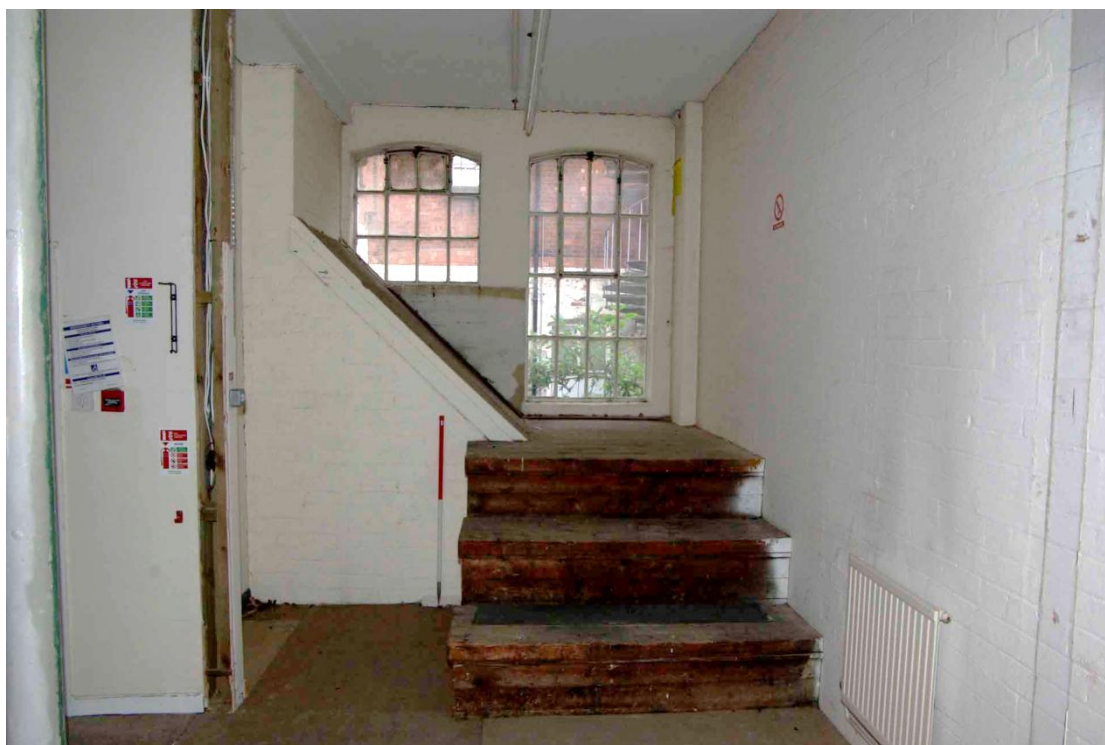


Figure 34 Ground floor south range, north east corner
Looking north east. 1m scale

First Floor

The first floor front range is reached via the main stairs in the north west corner of the range. Both the front range and the cross range form a single open space on this floor (Figs. 35, 36 and 37). The front range at this level extends across the whole frontage as shown in Figure 35. The lift forms a prominent feature at the junction of the front and cross ranges. The windows facing out onto Oxford Street use reeded obscured glass whilst those on the cross range are clear.

The south range is also a large open space although a new toilet block with plasterboard walls has been inserted into the north western corner (Figs. 38, 39 and 40). Only the stairs in the middle of the north wall are present on this floor. Originally the stairs were open to the room but have now been enclosed. A blocked doorway modified from a window is on the southern wall in the western corner. The south range only has a basement, ground and first floor unlike the front range which has a second floor. A false ceiling hides much of the roof structure but a small section of principal rafter and truss can be seen over the stairs (Fig. 41). The roof appears to be of typical late 19th century industrial design with metal stirrups holding the principals to the trusses.



Figure 35 First floor front range
Looking south east. 1m scale



Figure 36 First floor cross range
Looking south. 1m scale



Figure 37 First floor front and cross range
Looking north east



Figure 38 First floor south range
Looking north east. 1m scale



Figure 39 First floor south range
Looking south east. 1m scale



Figure 40 First floor south range
Looking west. 1m scale



Figure 41 South range roof detail
Looking south east over stairwell

Second Floor

Only the front range has a second floor which has been subdivided into smaller offices by the insertion of plasterboard partitions. The main stairs lead up to a narrow corridor running across the front of the building (Fig. 42). As in the south range the roof is hidden by a false ceiling but the area over the stairwell shows that the structure is quite simple and consists of purlins supporting common rafters (Fig. 43). In the eastern end office the bottom of a truss can be seen showing that in this range, as in the south range, the principal rafters are held by metal stirrups (Fig. 44). The offices have no fixtures or fittings related to the hosiery industry (Figs. 45 and 46). The rear, south west facing, windows look out over the roof of the cross and south ranges (Fig. 47).

The Courtyard

The small courtyard on the eastern side of the cross range is reached through the double doors onto Oxford Street (Figs. 48 – 50). The eastern side is formed by a high brick wall. The only access from the building is through the lift which opens at ground level into the yard. A fire escape door in the south east corner also gives access to the courtyard but this does not appear to have been in regular use. A small tower at the top of the lift shaft houses the winding gear.

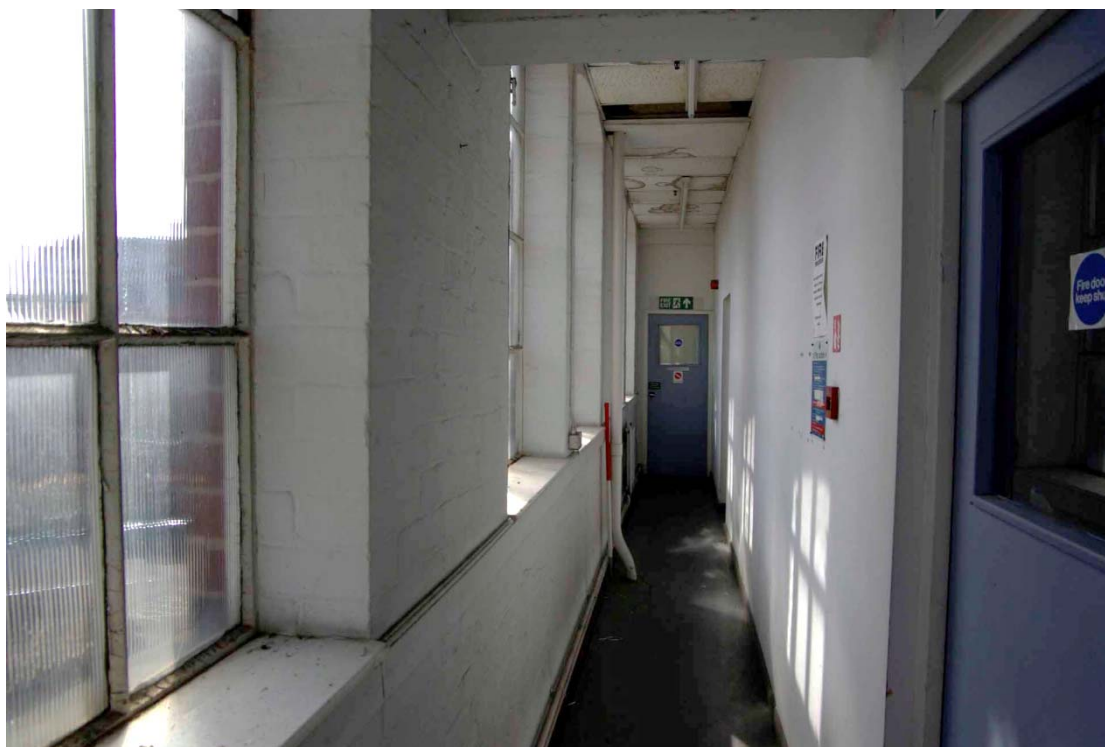


Figure 42 Front range second floor corridor
Looking south-east. 1m scale

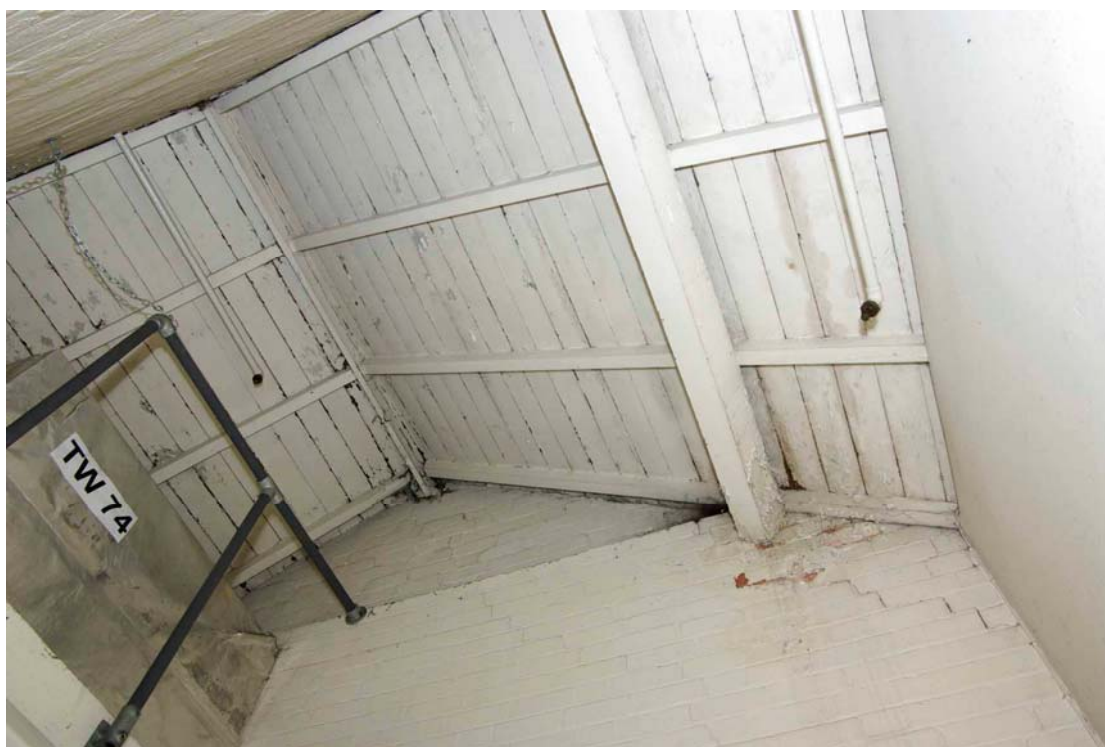


Figure 43 Front range, roof detail over stairwell
Looking west



Figure 44 Front range roof detail, easternmost office



Figure 45 Front range office
Looking north-west. 1m scale



Figure 46 Front range offices and lift
Looking north-east



Figure 47 External roof detail of cross and south ranges
Looking south-west



Figure 48 Inside view of courtyard doors
Looking north-east



Figure 49 Courtyard, south range and side wall
Looking south



Figure 50 Courtyard, junction of cross and south ranges
Looking west



Figure 51 Courtyard, lift shaft and entrance from Oxford Street
Looking north-west



Figure 52 Courtyard, rear of front range
Looking north east

Discussion

The building appears to be of a single phase and has seen few significant alterations since its construction. No internal fittings have survived from its use as a hosiery factory making it difficult to understand the purpose of each floor and room. Most notable is the growth and subsequent demolition of the surrounding buildings so that once again the building stands on its own.

Archive

The archive consists of:

This report,

1 contact sheet containing 129 digital photographs,

1 contact sheet and negatives of 27 35mm black and white photographs,

1 ULAS photographic record sheet.

1 DVD of this report and the digital photographs in jpeg and tiff format.

Publication

A summary of the work will be submitted for publication in the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society* in due course. A record of the project will also be submitted to the OASIS project. OASIS is an online index to archaeological grey literature.

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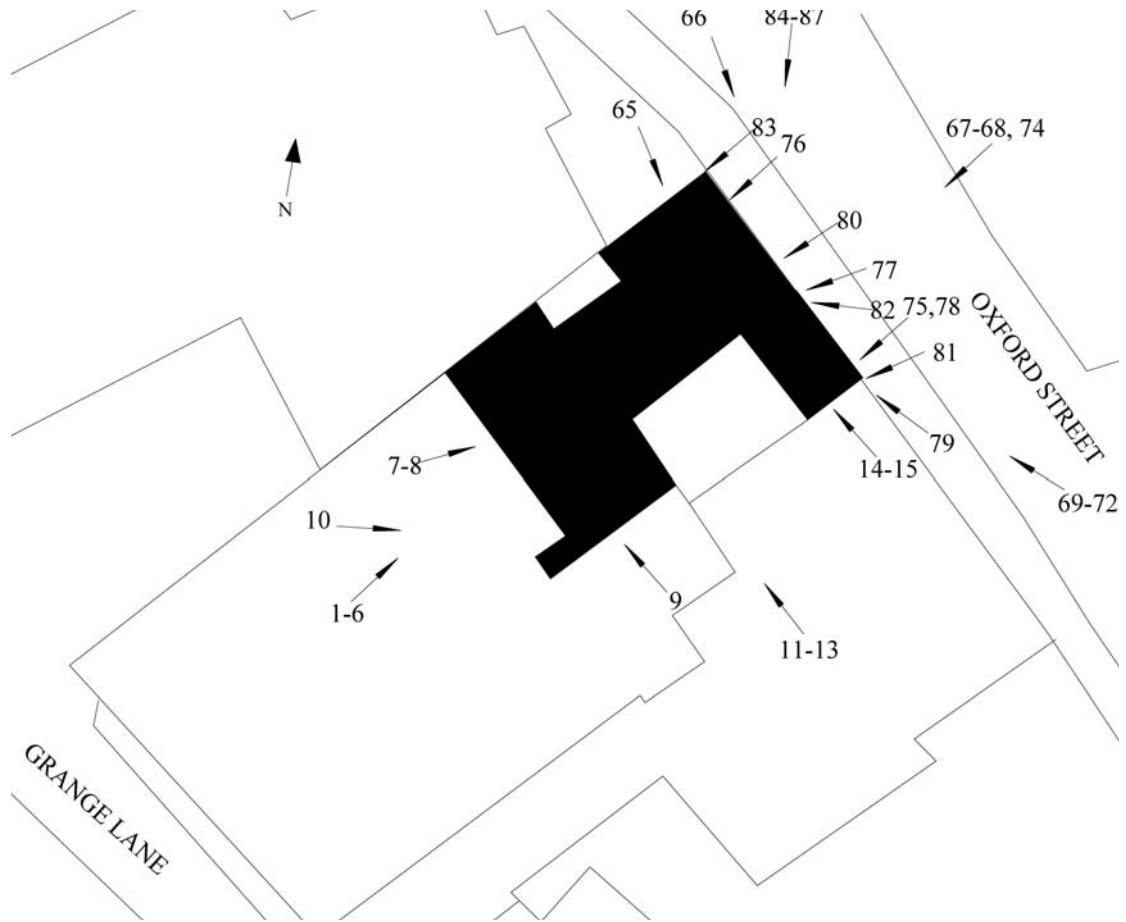
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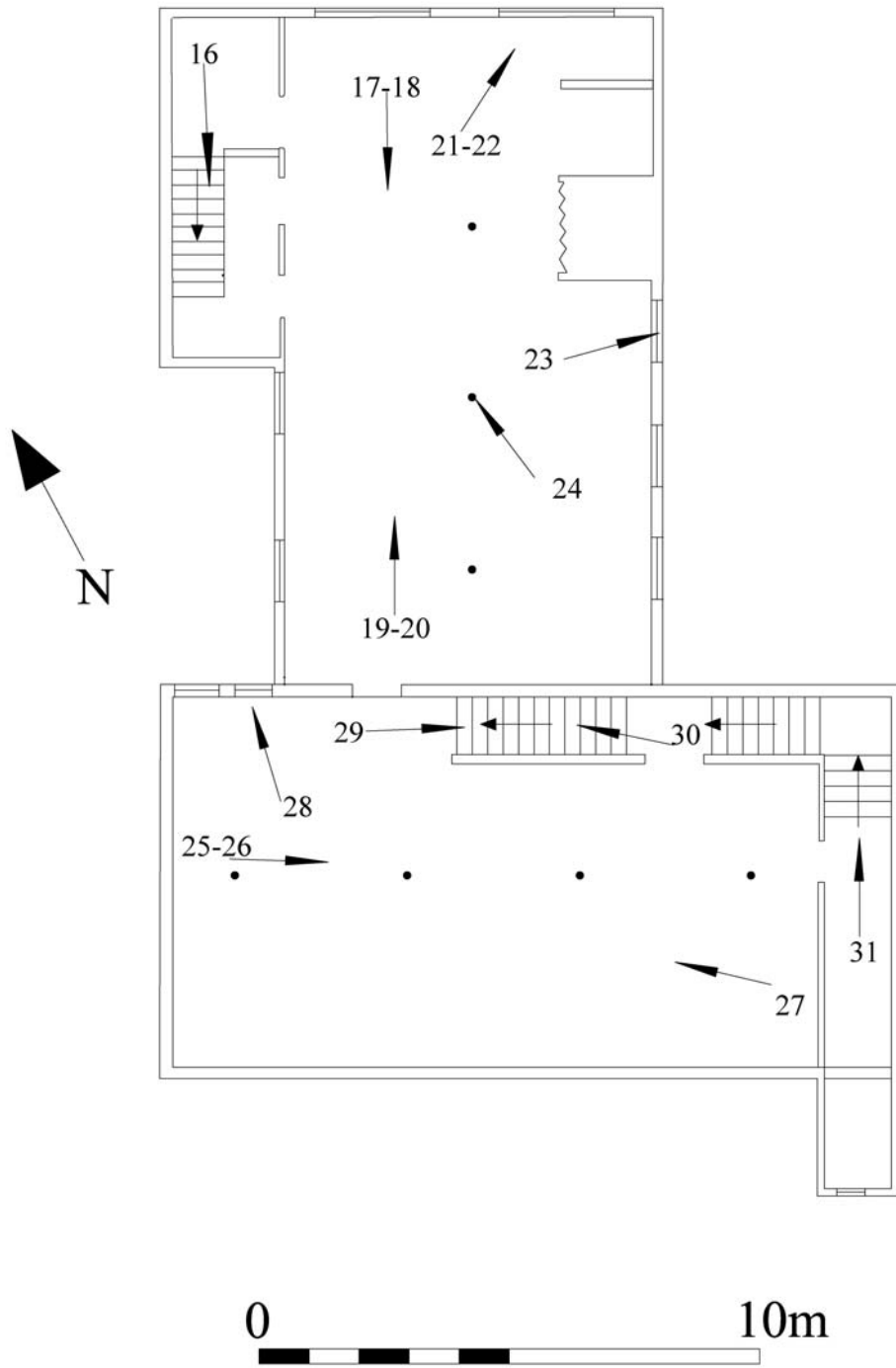
ULAS. *Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording (Photographic survey):53 Oxford Street, Leicester*. 2015.

Appendix 1 Location of photographs taken during survey

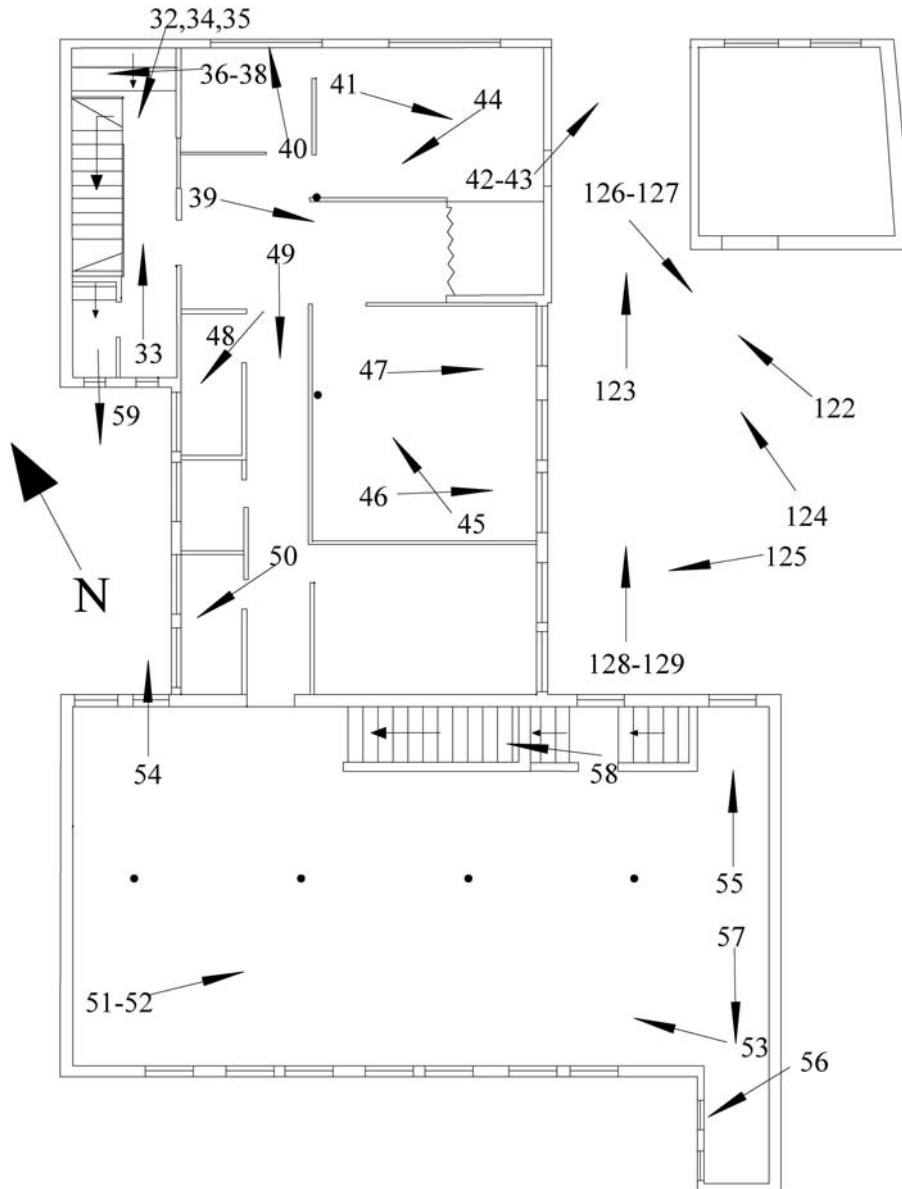
Note that the numbers refer to the gazetteer photo reference number as in Appendix 2 below.



Photographs taken outside the building

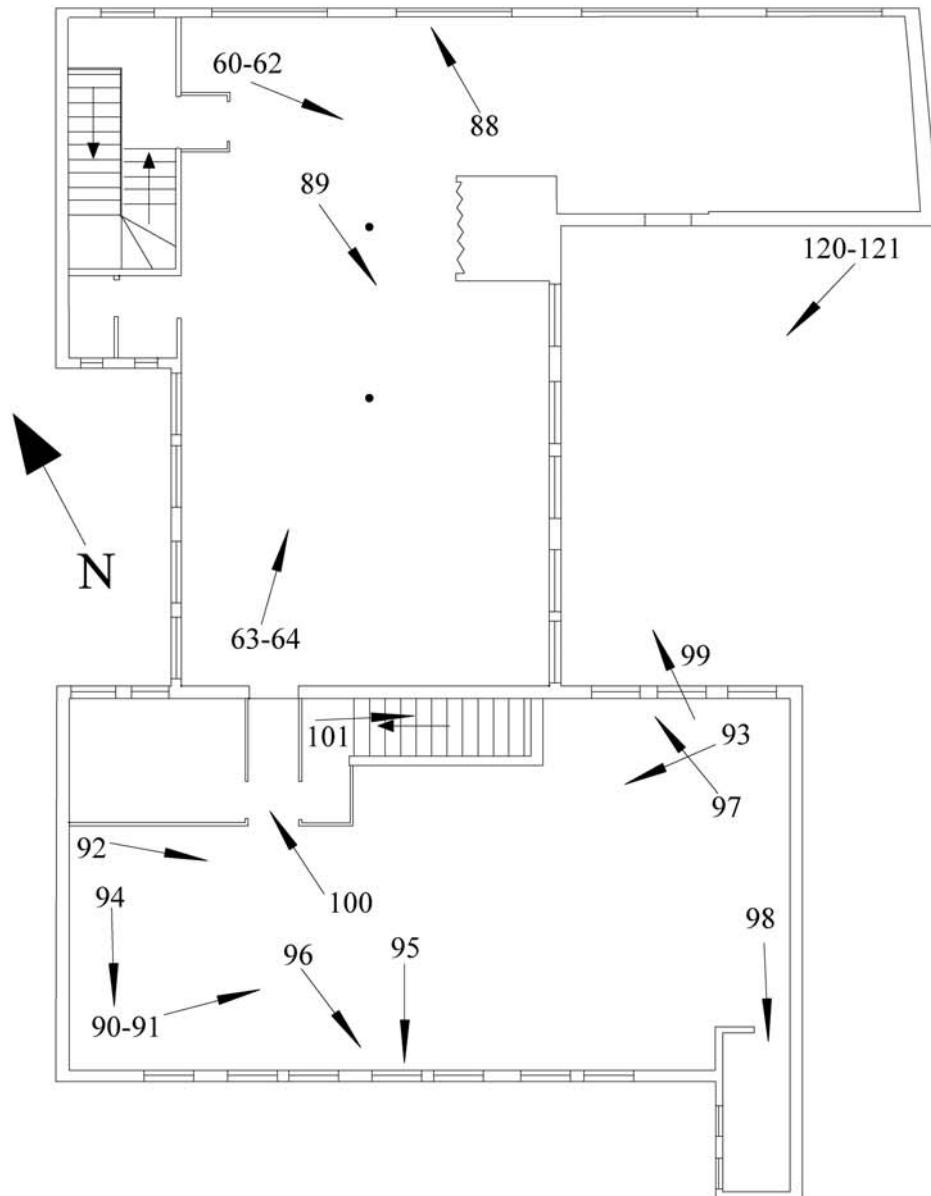


Basement

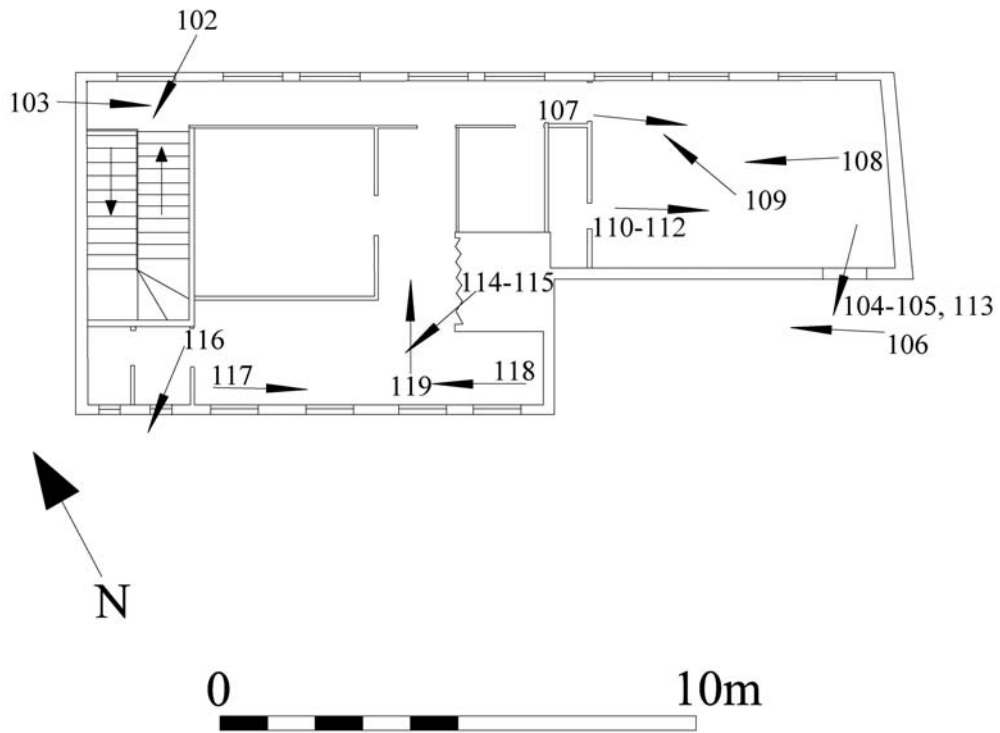


0 10m

Ground Floor



1st Floor



2nd Floor

Appendix 2 Gazetteer of photographs taken

B+W Shot No.	Digital Shot No.	Description	Facing	Scale
1	–	Record shot	–	–
2	1,2	SW elevation General shots	N	1m
–	3 to 6	Site location shots	various	–
–	7	SW elevn window detail	NE	–
3	8	SW elevn blocked basement windows	NE	1m
4,5	8 to 15	SE elevn shots	NW	1m
6	16	Main basement stairs	SW	1m
7	17 to 20	Basement front and cross ranges	various	1m
–	21	Basement boiler	NE	1m
–	22	Basement front range windows	NE	1m
–	23	Basement cross range window	N	1m
–	24	Basement column detail	–	–
8,9	25 to 27	Basement south range	various	1m
–	28	Basement south range window detail	N	1m
–	29 to 31	Basement south range stair details	various	1m
10,11	32 to 35	Ground floor main hall and stairs	various	1m
–	36 to 38	Ground floor main hall fittings	NW	1m
12	39	Ground floor reception area	SE	1m
–	40	Ground floor front window detail	N	1m
–	41	Ground floor E office detail	SE	1m
–	42, 43	Doors to courtyard	NE	–
–	44	Ground floor office	W	1m

13	45	Partially enclosed column	N	1m
14	46	Ground floor office general shot	N	1m
–	47	Safe in G floor office	–	–
–	48	Ground floor cross range office	W	1m
–	49	Ground floor cross range corridor	SW	1m
–	50	Ground floor cross range window detail	SE	1m
15,16	51 to 53	Ground floor south range general shots	NE & NW	1m
–	54	West lightwell/yard	NE	–
–	55	G floor, S range area over corner stairs	NE	1m
–	56	G floor, S range toilet window detail	W	–
–	57	G floor, S range toilet entrance	SW	1m
–	58	G floor, S range, W staircase	NW	1m
–	59	West lightwell/yard	SW	–
17 to 19	60 to 64	First floor front, cross and south ranges	various	1m
20	65	NW facing elevation	SE	–
21, 22	66 to 87	Oxford St elevations	various	–
–	88	1st floor front range, window detail	N	1m
–	89	1st floor cross range, window detail	SE	1m
23,24	90 to 93	1st floor south range general shots	various	1m
–	94	1st floor south range, blocked window/door	SW	1m
–	95 to 97	1st floor south range window detail	SE & NW	1m
–	98	1st floor south range toilet entrance	SW	1m
–	99	View of courtyard from S range	NE	–
–	100	1st floor S range inserted walls	NE	1m

–	101	South range roof detail	SE	–
–	102	Front range roof detail over stairs	NW	–
25	103	Front range corridor	SE	1m
–	104, 105	Courtyard from 1st floor	SW	–
–	106	Lift shaft tower	NW	–
26,27	107,108	2nd floor front range W room, general shots	various	–
–	109	2nd floor front range W room window detail	N	1m
–	110 to 112	2nd floor front range W room roof truss	–	–
–	113	Cross range and south range roof	W	–
–	114,115	2nd floor S W facing window detail	SW	1m
–	116	2nd floor toilet window detail	SW	–
–	117 to 119	2nd floor general shots	various	1m
–	120 to 129	Courtyard	various	–

Appendix 3 Contact Sheet of Photographs taken



A9_2015 (1).JPG



A9_2015 (2).JPG



A9_2015 (3).JPG



A9_2015 (4).JPG



A9_2015 (5).JPG



A9_2015 (6).JPG



A9_2015 (7).JPG



A9_2015 (8).JPG



A9_2015 (9).JPG



A9_2015 (10).JPG



A9_2015 (11).JPG



A9_2015 (12).JPG



A9_2015 (13).JPG



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A9_2015 (16).JPG



A9_2015 (17).JPG



A9_2015 (18).JPG



A9_2015 (19).JPG



A9_2015 (20).JPG



A9_2015 (21).JPG



A9_2015 (22).JPG



A9_2015 (23).JPG



A9_2015 (24).JPG



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A9_2015 (27).JPG



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A9_2015 (50).JPG



A9_2015 (51).JPG



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A9_2015 (97).JPG



A9_2015 (98).JPG



A9_2015 (99).JPG



A9_2015 (100).JPG



A9_2015 (101).JPG



A9_2015 (102).JPG



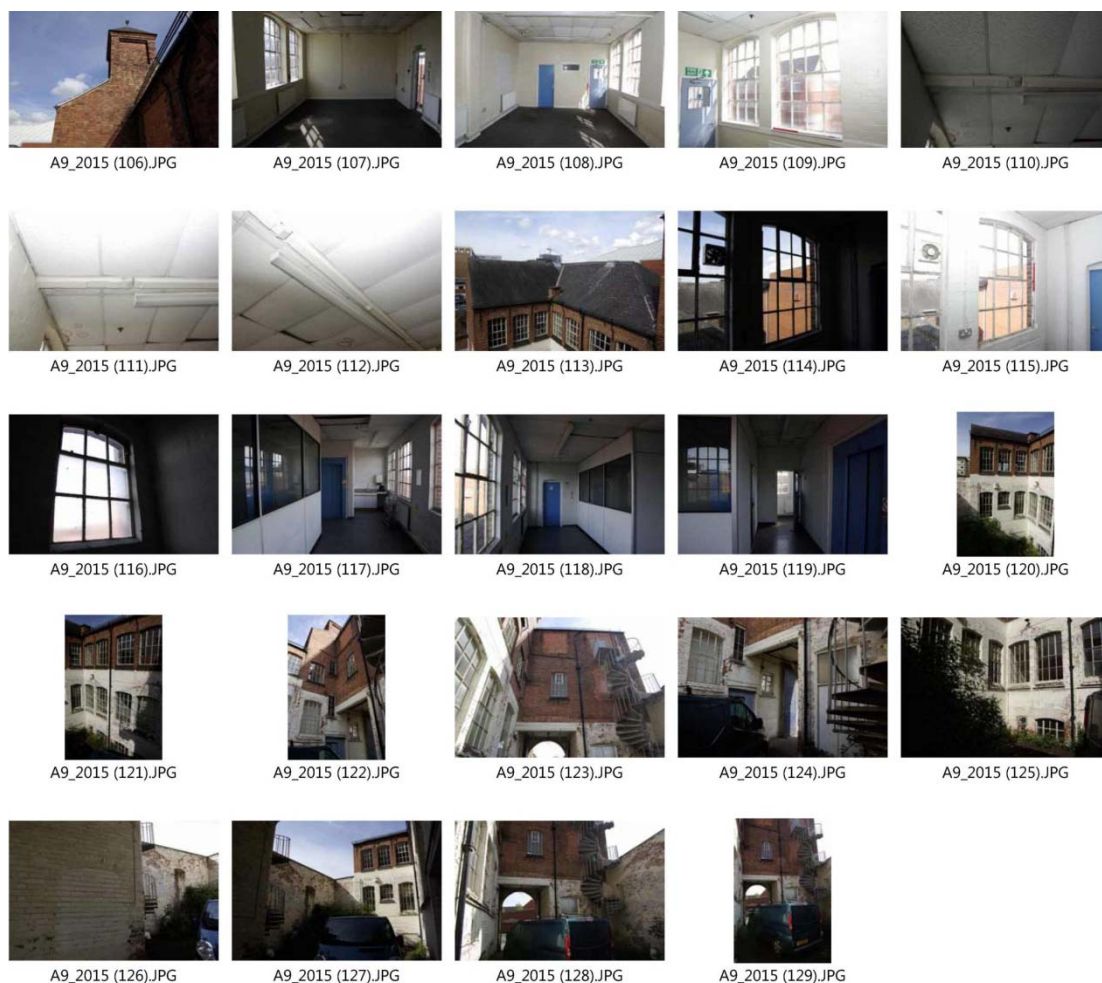
A9_2015 (103).JPG



A9_2015 (104).JPG



A9_2015 (105).JPG



Appendix 4 OASIS Information

Project Name	Historic Building recording (photographic survey)
Project Type	Building recording
Project Manager	R Buckley
Project Supervisor	A Hyam
Previous/Future work	None
Current Land Use	Redundant factory
Development Type	Student accommodation
Reason for Investigation	As a condition
Position in the Planning Process	Ongoing
Site Co ordinates	SK 5856 0393
Start/end dates of field work	5.05.2015 – 7.05.2015
Archive Recipient	LCC
Study Area	

ULAS Contact Details

Richard Buckley or Patrick Clay
University of Leicester Archaeological
Services (ULAS)
University of Leicester,
University Road,
Leicester LE1 7RH

T: +44 (0)116 252 2848

F: +44 (0)116 252 2614

E: ulas@le.ac.uk

W: www.le.ac.uk/ulas



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