

**59 & 59½ Highcross Street, Leicester:
Historic Building Statement**

and

**Supplementary Historic Building Statement
On the Rear Range of
59 Highcross Street, Leicester**

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For Shires GP Ltd.

Checked by Project Manager

Signed:**Date**

Name:

University of Leicester Archaeological Services

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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.

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.

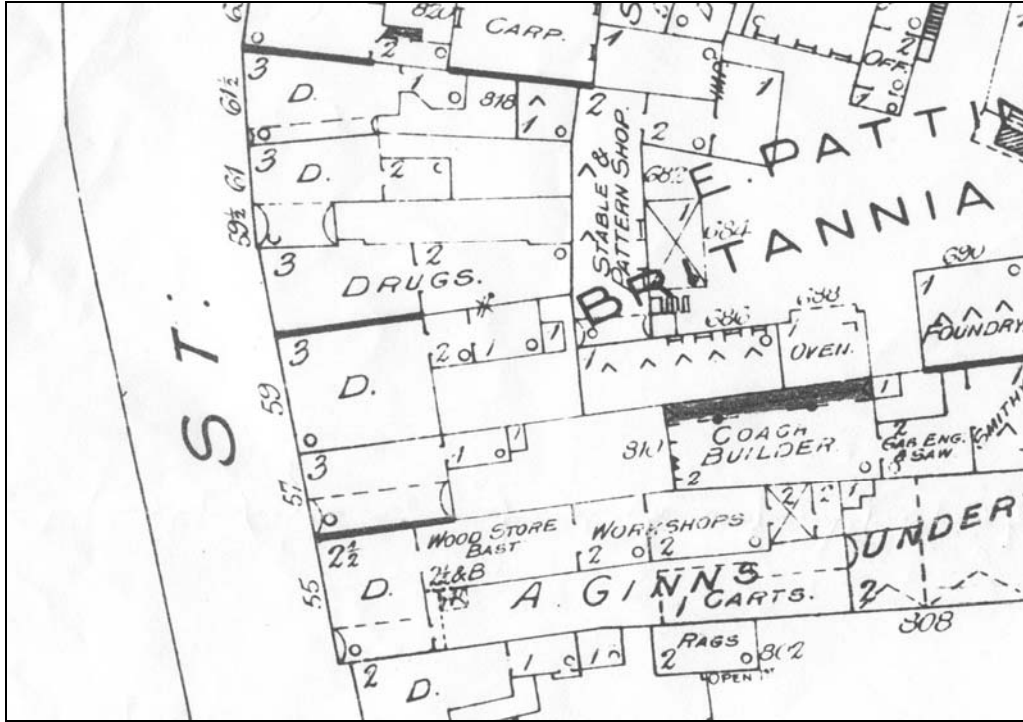


Figure 4. Extract from 1895 Goad fire insurance plan (LLRRO ref: DE4702/14/2) showing one and two storey ranges to the rear of 59 Highcross Street.

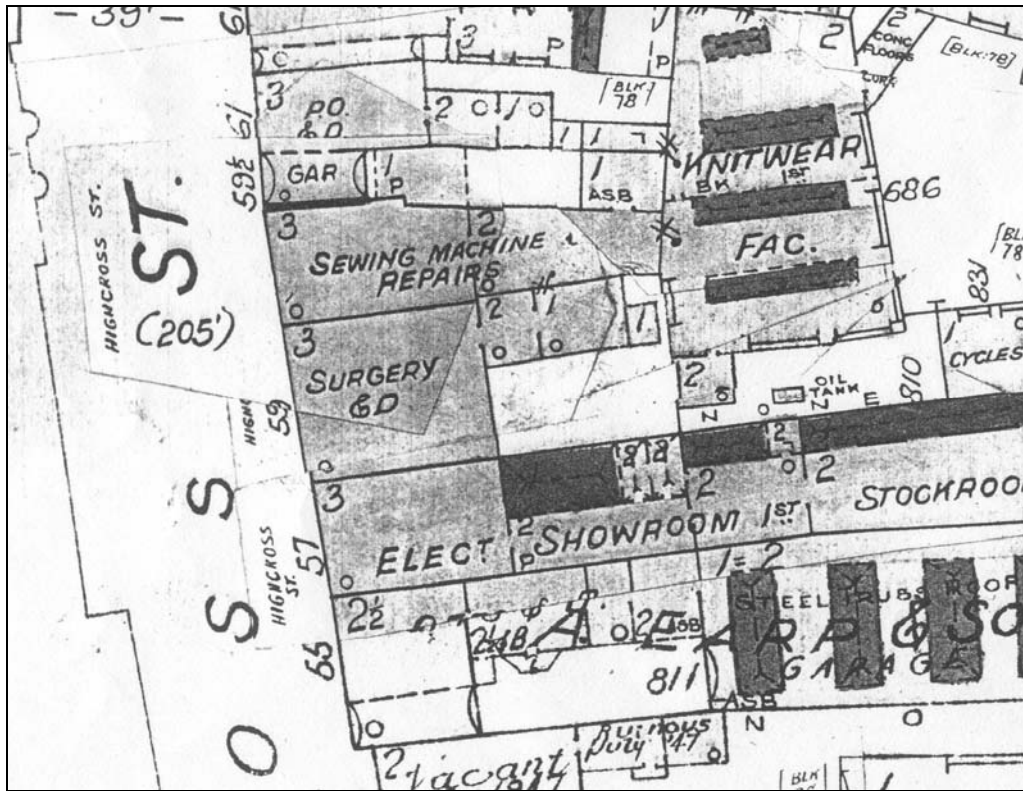


Figure 5. Extract from 1961 Goad fire insurance plan (LLRRO ref: DE4702/15/2) indicating that the large single-storey block on the south side of the plot was not extant by that date.



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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 dimensions to be checked on site. Do not scale off drawing.
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 1999 Ltd. Drawing no. 95008

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.).