

66 Hedleys

This 3-storey timber-frame building with cellar, dates from about 1450. The upper floor is from about 1600, built as an alteration or heightening of the building, which is Grade II listed. Originally built as a merchant's house, it later became two shops and a dwelling. Further alterations were carried out in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The cellar shows a coursed sandstone rubble wall to the west, presumably original, whilst the remaining walls are in later brick, starting with a large patch of Tudor brickwork on the east wall. There are two staircases, the western one blocked off by a modern floor, and the dividing wall has been breached in its front part to re-unite the cellars. The brick patching to this suggests 20th century work, with even more recent concrete blockwork and brickwork on the street wall, which probably infill coal chutes from the pavement, if not even separate coal cellars under the pavement. The cellars appear visually to extend just about to the front of the present ground floor, so not extending under the pavement. (This should be confirmed by measurement.) The west half contains a very large brick-built bread oven with stone flagged baking floor (about 6 x 10 ft internally), suggesting this shop was a substantial bakery. Such a large oven in so confined a space must have led to unpleasant, if not Dantean, working conditions, even with ventilation from the coal chute.

The entire structure above ground level is timber-framed, with some original wattle-and-daub panels. The chimney stacks are in brick.

The street frontage is of two identical gables, two bays deep. It has two jetties, the ground floor may have been brought forward in the 19th century to almost fill the lower jetty. The ground floor frontage displays very early plate glass windows from about 1850, contemporaneous with the Crystal Palace. These are set in slender iron framing.

The building was rescued by the City Council and renovated in 2003-9. The timber framing on the frontage was rendered to replicate stone quoins, said (perhaps rather tenuously) to have been the fashion in the 15th century. The gables now bear the dates 1450 and 2003.

The cellar is not normally open to the public.