



Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee
7 OCTOBER 2024

Dear Marcie Rejwerska

OBSERVATIONS ON LISTED BUILDING 241213
THE HORN PUBLIC HOUSE, CASTLE STREET, READING

Reading CAAC are very pleased to see this proposal for refurbishment of The Horn public house. We note that the 2023 consented application for repairs and refurbishment (221103), including roof repairs was only partially carried out.

This application does not include any details in relation to the proposed repair and refurbishment of the exterior of the building such as repainting, window repair or replacement, except in so far as required to enable the ground floor interior improvements and flat conversion.

It is also clear that the interior of the building has deteriorated considerably, removal of floorboards etc. between the date of the images in the officer's report on application 221103 dated 16 November 2022 and the September 2024 Heritage Statement accompanying this application.

Summary observations

- The location plan submitted only covers 2-4 Castle Street but the application covers 2-6 Castle Street which is the extent of the listed building ([1303691](#)).
- The position in relation to proposals for the repairs and refurbishment of the exterior and the unexpired works in application 221103 should be clarified.
- Items of concern to us are the basement/ cellar area and the partial removal of a chimney and installation of a new wall on the first floor.
- Many aspects of the refurbishment have not been specified in sufficient detail.
- Two of the three flats do not meet national minimum space standards and the headroom of the accommodation is not shown on the plans.

1. HERITAGE

1.1 Grade II listed The Horn public house occupies a prominent corner location at the junction of Castle Street and St Mary's Butts. As described in the Heritage Statement, it has extended its footprint over the centuries from a large property on St Mary's Butts (as shown on the 1853 Board of Health Map) to absorb 3 properties along Castle Street. It has also undergone modernisation and modification during that period.



Figure 1 The Horn from St Mary's Butts 1962, Graham Rose collection, Courtesy Reading Civic Society via Historic England listing comments

1.2 4/6 Castle Street was occupied by Mrs B A Beasley in 1975 and the Horn was at 2 Castle Street, according to Kelly's directory. In 1985 an application was made to extend the pub into the adjacent vacant shop for toilet facilities on the ground floor and a trainee manager's flat above¹. From the image below it seems that No 4 had already been incorporated. The windows to the first floor of 6 and 4 Castle Street are still as shown in the images below.



Figure 2 1980s image Peter Southerton. Courtesy Reading Borough Libraries local studies

¹ Evening Post 17 May 1985 p17



Figure 3 4 Castle Street c1915 Courtesy Reading Borough Libraries local studies

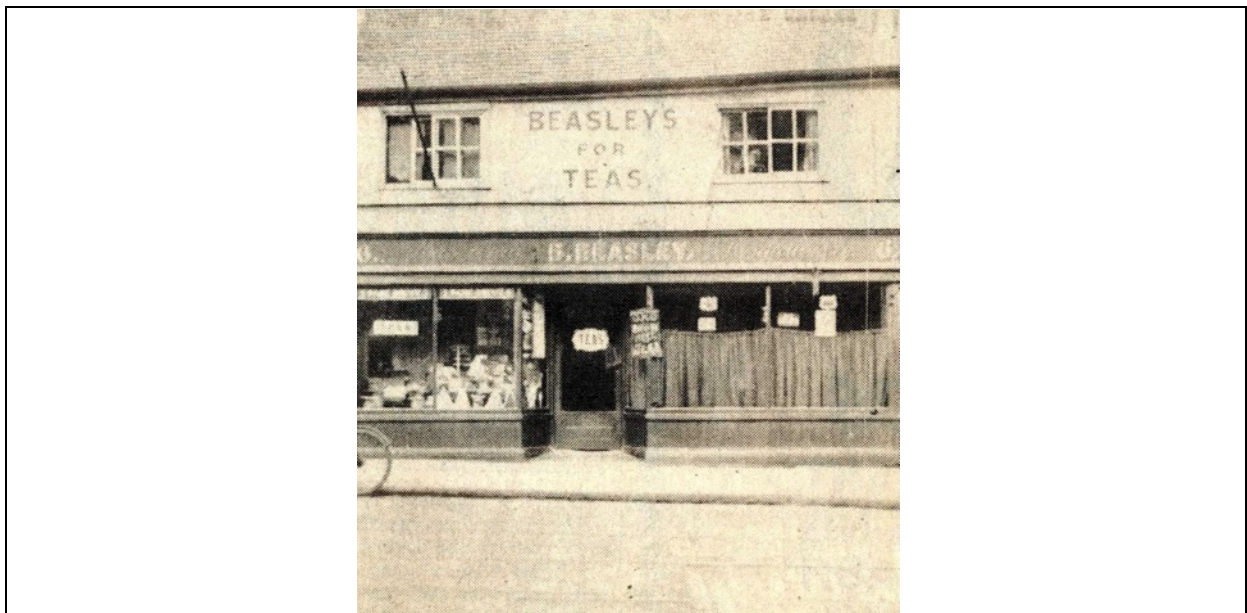


Figure 4 6 Castle Street c1930s Courtesy Reading Borough Libraries local studies

1.3 It is still possible to read the individual properties in the floorplan of The Horn and the elevations.



Figure 5 Panoramic photo of southern elevation of The Horn – from L to R - 6, 4, 2 Castle Street. October 2024.



Figure 6 St Mary's Butts elevation October 2024. The original public house building to the right.

1.4 Some entrances to the pub have been blocked up, including a corner entrance, the doorway of which was still clearly visible in the 1962 image above.

1.5 We have been unable to establish from images when the window of No 4 Castle Street was blocked up.

2. PROPOSED WORKS

2.1 Ground floor

2.1.1 We do not object in principle to the proposed works to the ground floor with the exception of the removal of the staircase and blocking off the basement/cellar. This is in the most historic part of the public house and presumably provides internal access to the cellar which has a trap door on St Mary's Butts. There is no information in the Heritage Statement about the basement as works are not proposed there (para 5.2). The basement has a grille, a cellar entrance and an area of cobbled paving for deliveries and is a significant feature on the street.



Figure 7 Cellar grille, entrance and paving



2.1.2 Urgent structural works are required to the ground floor window on the corner of St Mary's Butts. As identified in the Conservation Officer's photographs for application 221103, the woodwork is in a very poor condition. The frame is also slipping (see below).

2.2 First floor works

2.2.1 The conversion of the first floor to three flats will cause some harm to the historic fabric of the first floor.

2.2.1 We would like to draw attention to the removal of part of a chimney breast and a door and building a new wall to create Flat 1, see circled area below. This appears to harm the historic structural integrity and identity of Nos 4 & 6 St Mary's Butts.

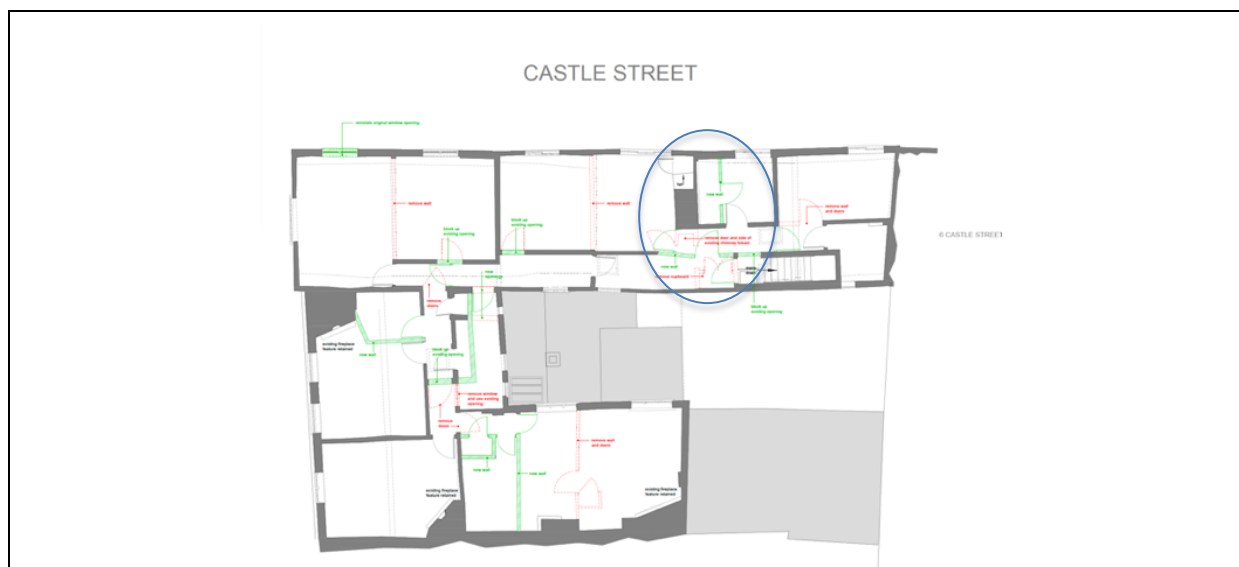


Figure 10 Changes to first floor accommodation

2.2.2 Without inspecting the building ourselves we are unable to comment any further on the impact that the removal of interior walls and the creation of new openings and blocking up of old openings will have on the building. Neither can we comment on any works to the rear courtyard area.

2.3 The works, particularly the conversion of the first floor to residential will require additional services, water, electricity, sewage etc to be installed to the property. The means by which these are to be achieved have not been described in the documentation submitted.

2.4 A detailed schedule of repair works is required as described in the Conservation Officer's report on application 221103.

2.5 Conditions are required to ensure that suitable materials are used for all the works.

2.6 The application does not describe improvements that we would expect to see such as secondary glazing, insulation and sound proofing.

2.7 The sizes of two of the three residential units fall below minimum space standards of 50sqm. The headroom has not been specified and as this is a heritage property the ceiling heights might be low and fall below space standards.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 We welcome this application to bring The Horn back in to use with residential accommodation above but we suggest that there are many details that required clarification before a decision can be made.

Yours Sincerely

Evelyn Williams
Chair Reading CAAC
On behalf of Reading Conservation Area Advisory Committee
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