

## DELEGATED APPLICATION REPORT

Ward: Abbey Ward

App Ref: PL/26/0858 Listed building consent (Alt/Ext)

Address: 19-21 CASTLE STREET, READING, RG1 7SB

Proposal: Proposed works to both properties (19 and 21) including: reinstating/replacement tiles, timber joinery repairs/replacement, fixing/replacing fittings, mortar replacement, replace structural timber beam, removal of damaging decoration to brickwork/vertical clay tiles, removal of decorative paintwork and replacing damaged brickwork, repointing to chimney, decoration to timber windows.

Applicant: Miss Joanne Smith

Received date: 29/06/2026

Target Decision date: 07/09/2026 (agreed extension)

**Case Officer: Sian Hickey**

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### 1. SITE DESCRIPTION

The application site relates to No's.19 and 21 Castle Street, located on the south side of Castle Street. The buildings are listed and linked above the ground floor. The application site is located within the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area. The site is also within an Air Quality Management Area and an Area of Potential Archaeological Significance. The site is located within Reading Central Core Area. This part of Castle Street primarily consists of businesses at ground floor level and residential/offices at the upper floors.

List Entry Number: **1113414**

Summary of listing below, see appendix 1 for full listing.

*19 Castle Street is a Grade II listed former town house dating from the early eighteenth century, with later eighteenth or early nineteenth century additions to the rear. The building is designated for its exceptional architectural and historic interest, representing a high-status Georgian townhouse with a well-proportioned and architecturally refined principal elevation. Particular significance derives from the survival of substantial eighteenth-century historic fabric, including decorative door cases, timber panelling, window shutters, the principal staircase, fireplaces, and ornate plasterwork.*

The building also has significance through its use of polychromatic brickwork, a characteristic feature of Reading's historic architecture. Externally, the symmetrical five-bay frontage, decorative entrance surround, timber sash windows and early nineteenth-century railings make an important contribution to the character and appearance of Castle Street.

Historically, the property illustrates the development of Reading during the eighteenth century when earlier timber-framed buildings were replaced by fashionable brick townhouses. It contributes to the historic townscape of Castle Street and has strong group value with neighbouring listed buildings, particularly Nos. 17 and 21 Castle Street and the Grade II listed Sun Inn opposite.

The principal heritage significance is concentrated within the historic front range, its architectural composition, surviving internal fixtures and fittings, and the evidential value of the building as an early Georgian townhouse of considerable status.

Site visit date: 21/07/2026

Photo of site notice in place:



The Conservation Officer also carried out a site visit on 21/08/2026.

## **2. PROPOSAL AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

Listed Building Consent is sought for the following works to cover both property 19 and 21 to the rear side return elevations and cover the below:

- Vertical 'Mathematical'<sup>1</sup> clay tile reinstatement / replacement – opening up of the building to see the extent of the damage to the timber frame / joinery.
- Timber joinery repairs / replacement where there are notable damage / rot / decay and fixing damage / replacement of fixings.
- Mortar replacement.
- Removal of damaged decorative paintwork to brickwork / vertical clay tiles and replacing damaged brickwork.
- Replacement of structural timber beam.
- Repointing to chimney.
- Decoration/painting to timber windows.

The Design and Access Statement states the proposed works are essential to address active structural deterioration, prevent further moisture-related damage, and ensure the continued preservation of the listed building's historic fabric. The submission states that all interventions would follow established conservation principles, prioritising minimal intervention, like-for-like replacement where feasible, and the use of compatible traditional materials.

### **Plans/documents considered:**

Application form

Design and Access Statement

Location Plan

Drawing No. P2026-0519-TRI-ZZ-EL-DR-B-2200 S2 – Existing Elevations

External Wall Investigation Report

Heritage Statement

Structural Inspection Report

Timber Specialist Report

Drawing No. P2026-0519-TRI-ZZ-EL-DR-B-2200 S2 – Proposed Elevations

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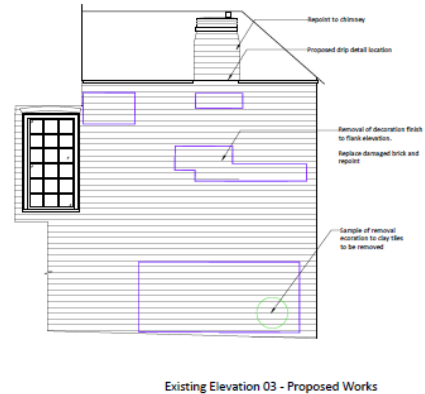
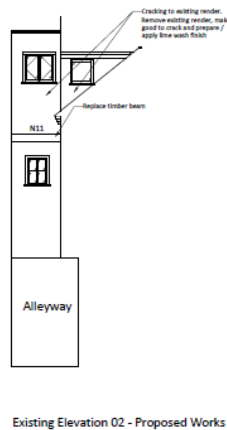
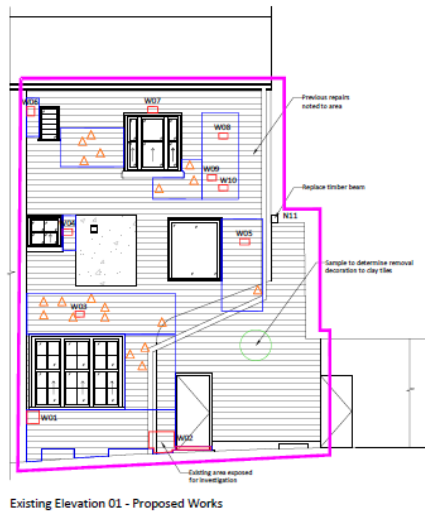
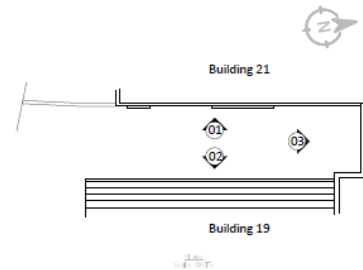
<sup>1</sup> A mathematical tile is a clay tile which is the same shape as a brick

As Received 29<sup>th</sup> June 2026

**KEY:**

|                                                             |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| AREAS INVESTIGATED TO FACADE                                | W01 |
| EVIDENCE OF DAMAGE TO CLAY TILES                            | △   |
| PROPOSED WORKS TO FACADE                                    | □   |
| EVIDENCE OF DAMAGE TO BRICKS                                | □   |
| SAMPLE CLEAN OF BRICK / CLAY TILE BEFORE ALL WORKS PROGRESS | ○   |

**NOTE:**  
Extent of repair subject to opening up. Existing clay tiles are likely to be fragile and difficult to salvage; full retention cannot be assured. Supplementary matching replacements may be necessary, subject to Conservation Officer agreement.  
  
All works greater than indicated will be recorded and communicated to the Conservation Officer to ensure works are carried out in line with overall works.



### 3. PLANNING HISTORY

There has been lots of previous old planning history for site.

The most recent planning history at the site is application PL/14/0696 - Replace rendering on second floor corner of building (19 castle st) – GRANTED 14/08/2014

### 4. CONSULTATIONS

A site notice was displayed at the front of the site and at the rear of the site by the case officer on 21st July 2026 for a period of 21 days.

No letters of representation have been received.

The following were consulted:

Conservation Area Advisory Committee – No comments received

RBC Conservation Officer - The Conservation Officer confirmed that the conservation approach for the repair works to the rear of the listed buildings at 19 Castle Street (Grade II\*) and 21 Castle Street, as set out in the submission, would be acceptable. She concluded that the works would be beneficial for the sustainability and conservation of the listed buildings and there would be no impact on the significance of the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area.

Therefore, there are no objections subject to conditions.

**Equality Act 2010:**

In determining this application the Council is required to have regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. However, there is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that the protected groups identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application. Therefore, in terms of the key equalities protected characteristics it is considered there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

**5. LEGAL AND PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT**

Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the LPA to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special interest which it possesses.

Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority in the exercise of its functions to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that proposals be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations include relevant policies in the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF) - among them the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. However, the NPPF does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making (NPPF paragraph 12).

**National Policy**

National Planning Policy Framework 2026 (Chapter 20)

National Planning Practice Guidance 2014 onwards (Paragraph 17)

**Reading Borough Local Plan (2019)**

CC1 (Presumption in favour of Sustainable Development)

CC7 (Design and the Public Realm)

CC8 (Safeguarding Amenity)

EN1 (Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment)

EN3 (Enhancement of Conservation Areas)

EN6 (New Development in a Historic Context)

**Other documents**

St Marys Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area Appraisal 2008

Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance 2008

**Local Plan Update**

The current version of the Local Plan (adopted in November 2019) turned five years old on Tuesday 5th November 2024. The Local Plan was reviewed in March 2023 and around half of the policies in the plan are considered still up to date. However, the rest need to be considered for updating to reflect changing circumstances and national policy. A pre-submission draft was submitted to the Secretary of State on the 9th of May 2025 and is currently at examination stage.

Although there is a five-year period for carrying out a review of a plan after it is adopted, nothing in the NPPF or elsewhere says that policies automatically become "out of date" when they are five years old. It is a matter of planning judgement rather than legal fact whether a plan or policies within it are out-of-date. This will depend on whether they have been overtaken by things that have happened since the plan was adopted, either on the ground or through changes in national policy, for example.

Officer advice in respect of the Local Plan policies pertinent to this application listed above is that they remain in accordance with national policy and that the objectives of those policies remain very similar in the draft updated Local Plan. Therefore, they can continue to be afforded weight in the appraisal below and are not considered to be 'out of date'.

## **6. APPRAISAL**

### **Character and Appearance**

Policy CC7: Design and the Public Realm is a strategic policy seeking high standards of design quality in new development. It sets out how various components of development including layout, urban structure and urban grain, and scale, make a positive contribution to their surroundings and respond positively to their local context.

Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment sets out the LPA's requirements for the historic environment. The policy requires that all proposals protect, and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. This is echoed by the NPPF Policy HE4 by stating "Proposals should avoid harm to heritage significance wherever possible and, where harm cannot be avoided, minimise it. Any harm to or loss of a designated heritage asset's significance, including harm arising from development within its setting, must be supported by a clear and convincing justification".

The proposed scheme is for works to the North Rear and West Side return elevations in terms of repair and replacements. The submitted information including photographs illustrate the general condition of the elements requiring repair or replacement.

The design and access statement includes details of existing condition resulting from survey work and states that the engineer confirmed that the tiles are generally fixed to solid boarding with a masonry backing, and no evidence of a traditional timber structural frame was observed, aside from a possible sole plate near the ground-floor door. The condition of the boarding behind the tiles was found to be highly variable: in some areas it remains sound and dry, while in others it has deteriorated due to dampness and decay. In these weaker areas the tiles are no longer securely fixed and rely only on their interlock with adjacent tiles. The pointing across the elevation is inconsistent and often of poor quality, contributing to moisture ingress. At the junction with the front range—particularly around the rainwater pipe—large sections of tiles have previously been replaced, indicating a history of localised failure. Most significantly, the timber lintel supporting the upper part of the rear façade over the passageway was found to be in poor, potentially very poor, condition, with damp, friable timber suggesting advanced decay. The applicant's structural engineer, therefore, recommended a comprehensive programme of conservation-led repair/replacement.

The proposed works and methods have been reviewed by the Planning Officer and the Conservation Officer. The Conservation Officer confirmed that the conservation approach was suitable and there are no objections subject to conditions. The Conservation Officer also commented that the proposal, which constitutes repair works for the historic fabric of the listed buildings at Nos 19 and 20 Castle Street, would result in a positive effect on their special architectural and historic interest. As such, the proposed works would also retain and conserve these buildings and their features which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the St Mary's Butts/Castle Street Conservation Area, meeting Policies EN1, EN3 and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan, 2019; and HE4, HE5, HE6 and HE9 of the NPPF, 2026. Therefore, the Council supports the proposal on heritage grounds. It is also considered that the proposed works would be necessary to minimise further degradation.

The works are at the rear of the site and would therefore have no impact on the Castle Street street scene. Although there are public views from the rear of the site from Simmonds Street, the proposed areas for the works can be seen on the submitted elevation plans and are considered fairly minor in scale.

Overall, it is considered that the proposal will protect and enhance the Listed Building in accordance with the relevant planning policies referenced above.

### **Residential Amenity**

Policy CC8: Safeguarding Amenity sets out expectations to ensure that new development does not reduce the quality of the environment for others, particularly where it would affect residential properties.

Although there are residential units nearby, due to the nature of the proposals, there are no identified risks of the proposed works causing harm to neighbouring amenity.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The proposed development has been assessed as set out above and is considered to be acceptable on that basis, subject to the following conditions.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION - GRANT**

### **Recommended Conditions:**

1. The works hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this consent.  
REASON: In accordance with Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. The development hereby permitted shall ONLY be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:  
Location Plan received 29<sup>th</sup> June 2026  
Drawing No. P2026-0519-TRI-ZZ-EL-DR-B-2200 S2 – Proposed Elevations received 29<sup>th</sup> June 2026  
  
REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure that the development is carried out and adhered to in accordance with the application form and associated details hereby approved.
3. All external works of repair, reinstatement, replacement and making good to the retained fabric shall match the existing adjacent work with regard to the methods used and to material, colour, texture and profile. All such works and finishes shall be maintained as such thereafter.  
REASON: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the heritage asset in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
4. Any replacement material of mathematical tiles and brickwork to be used in the repair of the listed building hereby permitted shall match in type, material, colour and texture and be laid in bond, coursing and mortar bedding to match those found in the original/existing construction and design.  
REASON: In order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.
5. The reinstatement/replacement and repointing works of mathematical tiles and brickwork, repair and replacement works for the timber joinery and removal of and decoration works hereby consented shall be carried out and completed in accordance with the specifications detailed in the approved *Heritage Impact Statement dated June 2026, Structural Inspection of mathematical Tiles dated June 2026, and Inspection of timber species and condition dated 22/06/2026*.  
REASON: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of the building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

6. Prior to the commencement of any works in connection with the structural timber beam replacement, a detailed drawing and method statement shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works thereafter shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

REASON: The application contained insufficient information to enable these matters to be considered prior to granting listed building consent and the matters are required to be agreed in order that the works to the designated heritage asset are undertaken in an acceptable manner and in order to safeguard the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building in accordance with Policy EN1 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019.

## Appendix 1

List Entry Number: **1113414**

The listing for the building is as follows:

### **Summary**

Former town house. Built in the early C18 with late-C18 or early-C19 additions to the rear. Linked to number 21 Castle Street above the ground floor.

### **Reasons for Designation**

19 Castle Street, a former early-C18 town house with late-C18 or early-C19 additions, is listed at Grade II\* for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest:

- \* as an excellent example of an early-C18 former town house of considerable status with a well-proportioned and architecturally refined façade;
- \* for its surviving high-quality C18 internal fabric including elaborate door cases, main staircase, panelling, window shutters, and intricate plasterwork;
- \* for its use of the polychromatic brickwork, a noted feature of the architecture of Reading.

Historic interest:

- \* it is located within a significant historic townscape, illustrating the C18 change from timber-framed to brick houses along Castle Street, and making a notable contribution to its rich architectural character and historic evolution.

Group value:

- \* with the numerous listed buildings on Castle Street most notably with the adjoining 17 Castle Street (Grade II\*) and 21 Castle Street (Grade II) and the Sun Inn (Grade II) opposite.

### **History**

The first written record of Reading dates from the ninth century when the name seems to have referred to a tribe, called Reada's people. It is possible that there was a river port here during the Roman occupation, and by 1086 there was a thriving urban community, as recorded in the Domesday Book. Reading Abbey was founded in 1121 and this transformed Reading into a place of pilgrimage as well as an important trading and ecclesiastical centre with one of the biggest and richest monasteries in England. By 1525 Reading was the largest town in Berkshire and the tenth-largest in England when measured in taxable wealth.

The Dissolution led to the monastic complex becoming a royal palace and by 1611 the town's population had grown to over 5,000 as a result of its cloth trade. A number of the timber-framed houses from this period survive in Castle Street and Market Place.

During the C18 Reading became a prosperous market town and administrative centre, due to the development of the town's waterways and road links. In 1723 the River Kennet was transformed into a canal, linking Reading to Newbury, further extended by the opening of the Kennet and Avon Canal in 1810, to create a route between Reading and the Bristol Channel. Turnpike roads were also improved, establishing major coaching routes from London to Oxford, the West Country and the southern coast. Iron works, brewing and malting caused the expansion of the town further west and in the older part of Reading, many earlier, timber-framed buildings were refaced in fashionable brick. A new town hall was built just northeast of the west end of Friar Street in 1786.

In the C19 the town expanded further; three separate railway companies ran routes through the town to London, causing a rapid increase in population (9,400 in 1801 to 21,500 in 1851 and over 70,000 by 1900) as well as the development of Reading's famous Three B's industries: beer (Simonds Brewery, 1785-2010), bulbs (Suttons Seeds, 1837-1976) and biscuits (Huntley and Palmers, 1822-1976), although all three industries have now left Reading or moved out from the centre of the town. Growth during this period was characterised by the proliferation of brick terraces, and Hardy referred to Reading as 'Aldbrickham' in his novel *Jude the Obscure*. In 1869 the town was confirmed as the county town for Berkshire and the extent of the borough was increased to the south in 1887 and again in 1911 to the north and west.

Reading is one of the largest urban areas in the UK without city status. The town centre was considerably changed between 1969 and the 1980s with the development of the Inner Distribution Road and also the opening of the M4 in 1971.

Castle Street originally formed part of the southernmost of two ancient routes (the other became Oxford Road) passing through the town from London to the West Country. John Speed's map of Reading of 1610 shows the eastern part of Castle Street already fully developed on both sides and forming one of the principal streets of the town. By the C18, development extended as far as the junction with Tilehurst Road. This is shown on John Rocque's Map of Berkshire (1761). Comprehensive development of the area around Castle Street began in the early C19, with some of the buildings shown on Rocque's map seemingly replaced.

19 Castle Street was built in the early C18, probably as a high-status town house and replacing an earlier building on the site. A Sun Fire Insurance mark, number 467802, originally located in the pediment of the doorcase (present in the original List description but now removed) refers to insurance taken out in 1782 by the owner John Deane and tenant Frances Mitchell (widow). The building is first clearly shown on Charles Tomkins' map of 1802. When street numbering was introduced, the building was originally numbered as 137 Castle Street and in the 1847 Street directory, it is shown to have been in use as a ladies' school run by Mrs Harriett Cowderoy and Miss Martha Higham (described as a seminary in 1847, but Cowderoy and Higham's Ladies Boarding School in 1852). The house appears in a photograph, dating from between 1840 and 1849, by the pioneering photographer William Henry Fox Talbot. Harriett Cowderoy's (nee Higham) husband, Benjamin, who she married in 1845, had briefly been Talbot's business manager from 1846-1847 and was involved with local politics before leaving for Australia in 1852. By the time of the 1874 street directory, the building, numbered now as number 19 Castle Street and also known as Devonshire House, was occupied by John Old, a teacher of music. From the late 1880s until at least 1915 the building was run by the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA). The 1958 Goad Insurance map shows the building to have been in use, along with number 21, as the hotel and catering department for H & G Simonds, one of Reading's major brewers, founded in 1785. It subsequently had a number of other commercial uses before being taken over by the College of Integrated Chinese Medicine in 1993. The college acquired number 21 Castle Street in 2003, once again linking the two buildings.

## Details

Former town house. Built in the early C18 with late-C18 or early-C19 additions to the rear. Linked to number 21 Castle Street above the ground floor.

**MATERIALS:** silver-grey brick laid in header bond with red brick quoins and window surrounds. Clay tile roofs.

**PLAN:** three-storey plus basement, double-pile, main range fronting onto Castle Street with a two-storey plus attic extension to the south-west and a narrow single-storey plus attic and basement range to the south-east, extended in the C20. The ground floor has a central entrance passage with rooms either side giving onto a lobby providing access at the west end to the main staircase and the south-east range and, at the east end, to WCs and the large single room of the south-west extension. The first-floor staircase landing gives onto a lobby at the rear of the building with a large room at the north-east corner of the building and three other rooms at the front, partially sub-divided to create treatment rooms. The rear extension has a large single room reached via a short flight of stairs. A small corridor to the south of the treatment rooms connects with number 21. The layout of the second floor is similar with the rooms at the front of the building sub-divided into five treatment rooms all linked by a corridor, which also connects to number 21. A central lobby gives onto two rooms at the rear, divided by a stair giving access to a room in the attic of the rear extension. Beneath the south-east range is a long brick-vaulted cellar.

**EXTERIOR:** the principal (north) elevation onto Castle Street is symmetrical and of five bays with a parapet which has stone copings and a moulded brick cornice. The centrally placed entrance has a six-panel door with a plain transom replacing the original arched fanlight. The door surround has fluted Doric pilasters and Doric entablature and cornice capped by a segmental pediment. Fenestration is of timber sash windows, those on the ground floor having one-over-one plate glass panes, the first floor six-over-six glazing bars and the second floor three-over-six. The ground and first floor windows have deep segmental heads of gauged brick with fluted keystones and brick hoodmould. The second-floor windows have square-headed openings, also with fluted keystones. There are cast-iron rainwater goods with rounded hoppers on the interior of the two outer bays.

The rear (south) elevation is rendered with an ashlar effect and dominated by the full height, five-sided, bow of the rear extension. Fenestration, on the three principal faces, is of replacement timber sashes in plain, square-headed, openings, those on the first floor have six-over-six glazing bars while the ground floor ones are two-over-two apart from the larger central window which is eight-over-eight. The western return (to the alley between number 21) is blind with the western return having a window with paired four-over-four timber sashes on the ground floor and two, six-over-six, sash windows on the first floor. The roof slope above has a lead-covered, flat-roofed dormer with a pair of two-over-two timber casement windows. To the east of the extension is an oriel bay, with a six-over-six timber sash window, adjoining the sloping, slate-covered, roof of the start of the south-eastern range.

**INTERIOR:** the entrance hall has a deep moulded cornice and dado-height raised and fielded panelling. The eight-panel doors on either side of the entrance have eared moulded door surrounds with a cornice supported on fluted pilasters. The eastern ground-floor room has a dentil cornice, full height raised and fielded panelling and window shutters. The western room has been modernised but retains elements of the cornice. The south wall has a large elliptical arch with engaged fluted columns and a panelled soffit. At the south-west end of the hall is another elliptical arch but with fluted piers giving on the lobby to the large rear room in the western extension. This has a late-C18 or early-C19 patterned ceiling with a central pendant and modillion cornice. The windows retain their shutters and there is an eight-panel door. The closed string, open well staircase has tapered-column turned balusters, cushion-topped newel posts and dado panelling to the walls.

On the first floor, the two front (north) rooms have a deep moulded cornice, full-height panelling, window shutters and window seats. The western room has a corner fireplace with an eared surround, Rococo mantelpiece and cast-iron grate. The lobby to the south has dado-height panelling, some of its corning and an original door surround. The large rear room in the south-western extension, reached via a short flight of steps with the same type of balustrade as the main stair, has been modernised but retains its

eared marble fire surround and window shutters. The rooms on the second floor are plain and have been largely modernised.

Beneath the south-eastern range, the long brick-vaulted cellar has modern kitchen fittings and tiled floor.

**SUBSIDIARY FEATURES:** the building is fronted on Castle Street by early-C19 spear-headed iron railings on a brick plinth enclosing areas of clay tiling either side of the entrance.