



Photo 32. Plank shutters to the small window to the basement stairs, with original ironmongery

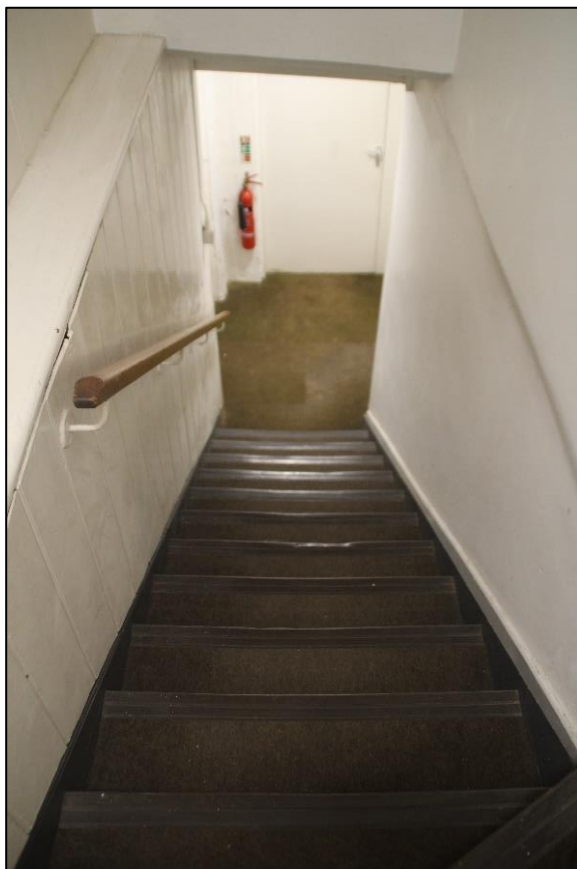


Photo 33. Stairs to basement

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- 4.62. The basement is formed of a collection of six rooms, four of which were accessible for inspection. Some accounts (for example the listing description and Van Koughnet 1895) detail how the Building was built over the medieval building, and that there is believed to be some survival of the previous fabric in the basement. Only two possible features were identified, both stone mullion windows, however the rooms have been modernised and fabric has been plastered with modern coverings, therefore there may be fabric present that is not at present visible. The fabric which is visible is brick. Whilst brick was used in the 13th and 14th centuries, it would be unlikely to form the foundations for the abbots manor house due to the use of stone being more suitable for the ground conditions.
- 4.63. B1, accessed to the right at the bottom of the staircase is a rectangular room with evidence of modernisation (Photos 34 and 35) It is lit by a ground level window, which indicates that its function may well have involved activity, such as washing or preparation of food, rather than storage, which would occur in the less well lit vaulted areas. The historic floorplans in Fig.18 show a hand written note on the ground floor plan 'servant's hall below', which may indicate this room (not being vaulted) was used for this purpose.
- 4.64. Modern piers have been added to strengthen the structure of the room, which rests on two large and thick chamfer edged cross beams and there is evidence of iron strapping, possibly preceding the inserted piers. Both have interesting internal notching or mortices which suggests the room was subdivided at some point by wooden partitions. The floor has a lino covering and the walls are plastered with a pebble dash style mix in areas and painted in others.
- 4.65. A curved doorway exits the room out into a tunnel which now appears blocked. Clearly this room has been extensively altered, and offers little evidence of the historic fabric present under the modern coverings and services that have been inserted.



Photo 34. Internal view of Room B1, looking east



Photo 35. View of Room B1, looking west

4.66. Room B2 is a barrel arched storage cellar (Photo 36) which has been rendered and cement floored but its form is otherwise discernible. A curved opening in the east wall features a blocked window (Photo 37). The window has a stone mullion and

iron bars; it is infilled with brick and is directly below the 19th century extension, therefore it is assumed this window was blocked at the time of the construction of that wing (Photo 38).



Photo 36. View of Room B2 – arch vaulted cellar



Photo 37. View of blocked window opening in B2



Photo 38. View of blocked mullioned window with iron bars

- 4.67. Due to the presence of modern render and cement, it is not possible to ascertain the structural fabric of the cellar, though it is possibly brick, uncovering work would allow for a better picture.
- 4.68. Moving south, B3 and B4 were once one open barrel vaulted cellars, presumably used for storage. There is evidence of subdivision in modern brickwork which may well have been structurally necessary. These rooms form the boiler room and the water tank room for the house, and have a large amount of machinery and services installed (Photos 38 and 40). Of interest is the steps leading from the east courtyard, incorporating flat slopes to each side, which may have facilitated the moving of wheeled equipment or barrels down the slope (Photo 41). Clearly these stairs indicate that this was the tradesmen's entrance, where goods, foodstuffs and materials were brought into the house for storage.
- 4.69. In B3, there is evidence of the brick construction of the vault, though the floor is now cement. There is evidence of a lime plaster or render which has failed over time to reveal the brickwork.



Photo 39. Brick construction of B3



Photo 40. View of the modern brick wall between B3 and B4



Photo 41. View of steps down from stable courtyard with sloped sides

- 4.70. In B4, a large watertank dominates the space, therefore opportunities for photography were limited. Of note here is the stone window with mullions noted in within the east courtyard, which is now pierced with services . The brick construction of the space, and lime render is also evident here. Photo 42 shows the window from an internal aspect, and to the left is the modern subdividing wall, which also features a large metal door, presumably part of the necessary equipment related to the installation of the boiler. The floor in this room is formed of setts, probably the original floor material as it is hardwearing



Photo 42 Interior view of the mullioned ground level window seen in the stable courtyard, in Room B4

On examination of the floorplans for the building, B5 (not accessed) also appears to be a barrel vaulted cellar with what appears to be brick wine storage compartments, which often survive in historic cellars. B6 was also not able to be accessed.

First floor

- 4.71. The first floor is accessed via both the back or secondary staircase and the grand staircase hall, The secondary stairs are much plainer than the main staircase; it has a dog leg formation featuring square newels with ball finials, closed string, turned balusters and a moulded handrail. Engaged half newel and finials finish the feature to the wall (Photos 43 and 44). The staircase hall is plain and lit with one window per landing as it rises through the house, the first floor of which has heraldic stained glass in the top lights.



Photo 43. Secondary stairs rising from the ground floor (left)



Photo 44. Secondary stairs at first floor half landing level (right)

4.72. Room 7 is accessed from the secondary staircase and is in the east wing of the Building. The historic floorplans in Fig.18 detail this room as a bedroom, though it was truncated from its extant extent, with a lobby and cupboard present on entering from the corridor. The room now has two windows (with characteristic deep reveals and panelled shutters) to the north, and one window to the east, with the north-easternmost window being blind externally (the roof of the 18th century servants wing abuts this part of the wall.).

4.73. The room is plainly decorated (Photo 45), with no cornice or panelling. Whilst panelling was not always a feature of bedrooms, as it is a high status room it is likely there would have been a cornice and possibly some ceiling decoration. The mantelpiece is carved softwood, now stripped, with a marble insert and looks to be part of the 18th century schemes seen elsewhere in the house, featuring acanthus leaf, beading and arcading detail (Photo 46).



Photo 45. View of Room 7 looking south

- 4.74. Of particular interest here is the door to the room from the staircase hall, which is double panelled with a strong bolection profile; suggesting it is original to the house and not a later replacement. Double 3 panelled doors with architrave accesses Room 8. In the historic floorplans it is shown as being open to the doorcase to Room 10 and without the subdivision seen in current floor plans (marked as a later addition). The room is panelled with the same square panelling as seen in the main staircase hall on the ground floor. It is stained and not painted which is a likely survival of its original appearance. It is possible this is the original location of the panelling and that portions of its were removed in the corridor/lobby area created later and re-used elsewhere. The panelling rises to the plain moulded timber cornice, and skirtings have been added (Photo 48).
- 4.75. There are two blocked architraved doorways in the panelling, one on the north wall and one on the south wall, which access Room 7 (or cupboard thereof on the historic plans) and one Room 9. These are decorated at their headers with the recurring scroll motif (as seen in Photo 47) seen elsewhere in and on the Building.



Photo 46. Fireplace in Room 7



Photo 47. Square panelling in Room 8 with the distinctive Tyttenhanger scroll motif