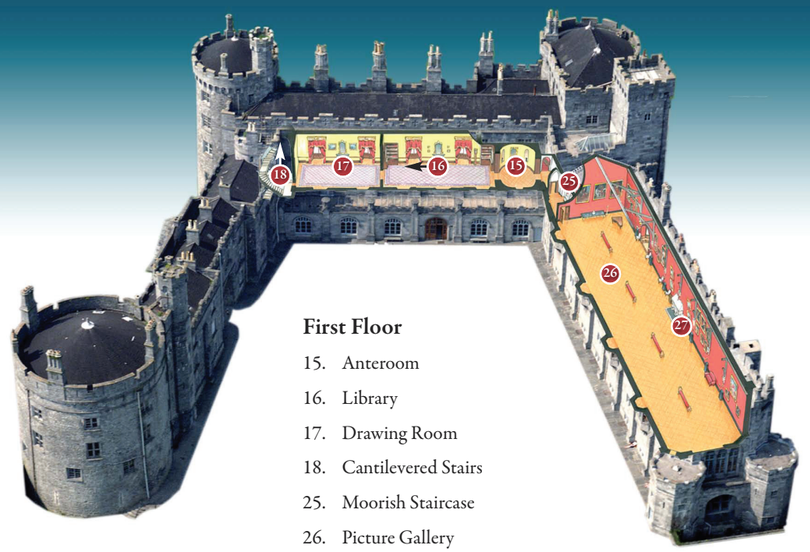


First Floor

15. Anteroom
16. Library
17. Drawing Room
18. Cantilevered Stairs
25. Moorish Staircase
26. Picture Gallery
27. Fireplace

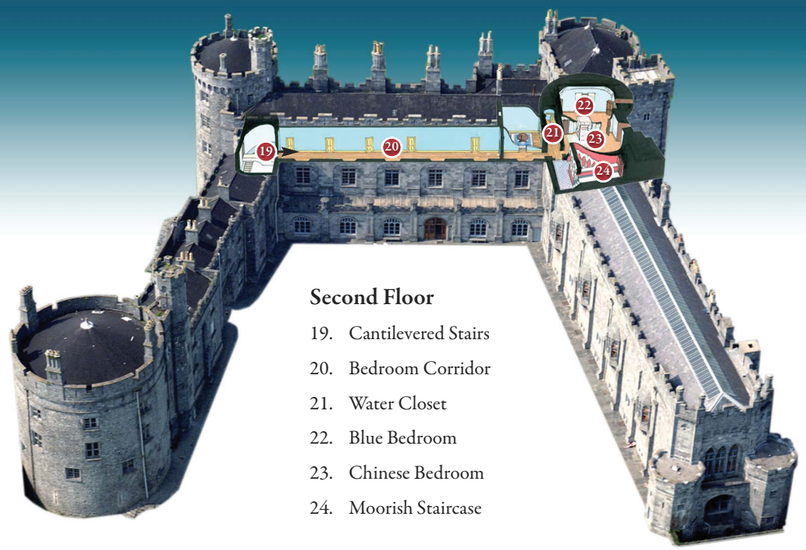
Today the Ante Room, Library and Drawing Room occupy the space as it was refurbished in the late 19th century. 17th century history records that it was in these state apartments that James Butler, 1st Duke of Ormonde, received the Papal Nuncio Giovanni Battista Rinuccini during the Irish Confederate Wars of that century.

Anteroom (15)
This small chamber and the room below were constructed where an earlier stone staircase was situated. It is elliptical in shape as the outline of the suspended ceiling shows.

Library (16)
The interior decoration is a faithful recreation of the furnishing style of the mid to late 19th century. Thanks to a fabric remnant found behind a skirting board, the French silk poplin on the walls was reproduced in its original pattern and colour by the firm of Prelle of Lyons in France. The restoration team were fortunate in finding the original receipt for the carpet in the family papers, and were able to trace the original company who had retained the design records.

Drawing Room (17)
The third room of the suite is decorated in the same style and has surviving paintings from the original Ormonde collection.

Cantilevered Stairs (18 / 19)
These stairs are constructed from Irish Wicklow granite and date to the early 19th century. They provide access to the west tower and centre block on all floors.



Second Floor

19. Cantilevered Stairs
20. Bedroom Corridor
21. Water Closet
22. Blue Bedroom
23. Chinese Bedroom
24. Moorish Staircase

Bedroom Corridor (20)
In the 16th & 17th centuries, this was a Gallery. At that time the family had a collection of 500 paintings, the largest in Ireland.

Blue Bedroom (22)
This is one of the balcony suite of bedrooms in the North Tower, and is directly over the Tapestry Room. This suite was allocated to King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra in 1904.

Chinese Bedroom (23)
This bedroom is connected to the Blue Bedroom by double doors and is decorated with a modern reproduction of a hand-painted Chinese wallpaper.

Moorish Staircase (24 / 25)
Based on Moorish architecture, this provides a major staircase in an awkwardly shaped building. It is carved with naturalistic foliage and small animal details.

Picture Gallery Wing (26)
This was built during the early 19th century building programme carried out by the architect William Robertson and was constructed on earlier foundations.

Marble Fireplace (27)
Made of Cararra marble and designed by J. H. Pollen in a quasi-medieval style with foliage carving attributed to Charles Harrison.

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Children must be supervised at all times
Daily talks scheduled in Picture Gallery
Tearoom in Victorian Kitchen

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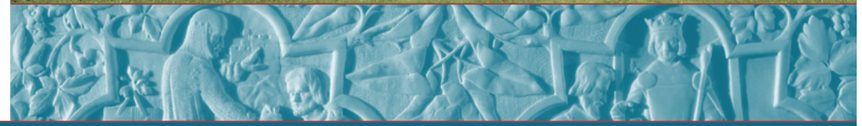
VISITOR'S GUIDE

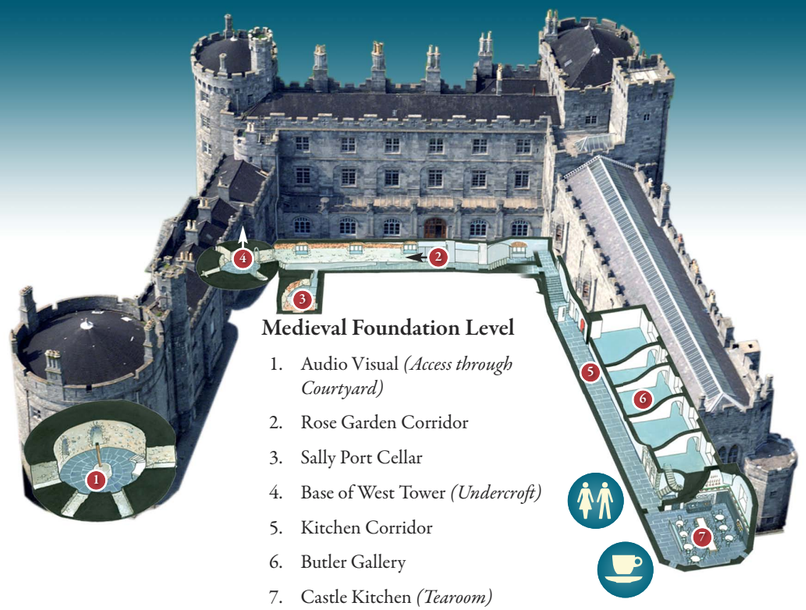


Kilkenny City

Kilkenny Castle

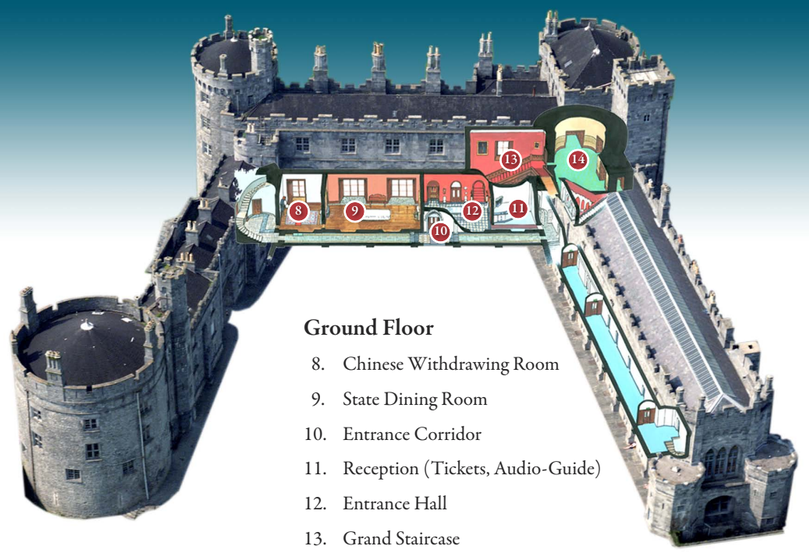
stands dramatically on a strategic height that commands a crossing on the River Nore and dominates the High Town of Kilkenny City.

Over the eight centuries of its existence, many additions and alterations were made to the fabric of the building, making Kilkenny Castle today a complex structure of various architectural styles. The original Anglo-Norman stone castle was built by William Marshal, 4th Earl of Pembroke (c.1146-1219) during the first decade of the 13th century. Kilkenny Castle later became the principal Irish residence of the powerful Butler family for almost 600 years. The Butler ownership began when James (c.1360-1405), 3rd Earl of Ormond, purchased the castle in c.1391, and lasted until 1967 when Arthur, 6th Marquess of Ormonde (1893-1971), presented it to the people of Kilkenny in return for a token payment of £50. The family sold almost all the contents of the castle in a ten-day auction in 1935. The buildings have been in the care of the Office of Public Works since 1969.



Medieval Foundation Level

1. Audio Visual *(Access through Courtyard)*
2. Rose Garden Corridor
3. Sally Port Cellar
4. Base of West Tower *(Undercroft)*
5. Kitchen Corridor
6. Butler Gallery
7. Castle Kitchen *(Tearoom)*



Ground Floor

8. Chinese Withdrawing Room
9. State Dining Room
10. Entrance Corridor
11. Reception (Tickets, Audio-Guide)
12. Entrance Hall
13. Grand Staircase
14. Tapestry Room

The medieval foundations date from the 13th century. Access extends down a short flight of steps and under the Rose Garden Terrace, then winds underneath the castle to the West Tower, which was originally called the Strongbow Tower.

Base of West Tower—the Undercroft (4)

In this circular chamber, the massive depth of the 13th century walls is evident. There are two plunging arrow loop windows and the remains of willow wicker "centering" on the ceiling, a process used to support the vault during its construction.

Chinese Withdrawing Room (8)

This room was reinstated to its original 1830s decorative order in the 1990s. The walls still have some original sections of hand painted Chinese wallpaper from 1810. Social etiquette of the 19th century prescribed that ladies withdrew to the withdrawing room after dinner, while the gentlemen indulged in unladylike habits of cigar smoking and drinking port and brandy.

State Dining Room (9)

This was the formal dining room of the Castle until the1860s when it became the billiard room. The house of noblemen commonly had two dining rooms, one for formal occasions and one for every day use. The walls are hung with a hand blocked wallpaper known as *Vernis Versailles*.

Entrance Corridor (10)

In the 19th century, the corridor was extended on both sides from an earlier roofed carriage entrance originally called a *porte-cochère*. It added a Gothicised dimension to the external appearance and internally connected both the east and west wings.

Reception (11)

Throughout the lifetime of the castle the names and functions of rooms were altered as fashions changed. The reception is shown in the 19th century plans as the "serving room".

Entrance Hall (12)

There has been an entrance hall here at least since the 17th century rebuilding of the castle. The north doorway through the massive curtain wall was remodelled on two occasions in the 19th century. The black and white stone floor is laid with Kilkenny Black Marble and sandstone, and is thought to date to the 19th century.

Grand Staircase (13)

This 19th century mahogany staircase was designed and made by the local firm of R. Furniss and Son, in Kilkenny. It leads to the Tapestry Room, then turns to give access to the first floor.

Tapestry Room (14)

This room is in the North Tower with its thick 12th century walls. The keyhole shape of the ceiling shows where a square tower was added on to the medieval round tower during the early 15th century. The tapestries are part of a series titled The Story of Decius Mus woven from designs by Peter Paul Rubens, after 1616. They depict the story of Decius Mus a Roman Consul who sacrificed himself to enable the victory of the Romans against the Latins, as recounted by Livy.