

## Montacute House Access Statement

Montacute House, Montacute, Somerset, TA15 6XP

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### Introduction

Montacute House is one of the best-preserved Elizabethan mansions. It was built in last years of the sixteenth century by Sir Edward Phelips. The House is on three levels and the Long Gallery (on the second floor) is the longest in England, measuring approximately 52 metres. The gallery houses over 60 Tudor and Elizabethan portraits on loan from the National Portrait Gallery. The formal gardens are mainly topiary and lawn, with some mixed borders. They are mostly flat with some raised terraces. Waymarked walks lead around the wider estate parkland, which include the large formal park and St. Michael's Hill, the site of a Norman castle and topped by an 18th century lookout tower.

### Points to note

- The mobile phone reception across most of the site is poor and unreliable. If you encounter any difficulties, please call the office on 01935 823289 as soon as you are able. In case of an emergency, please call 999.
- The property was not built on level ground therefore there are a number of steps, ramps and slopes to contend with.
- Dogs are not allowed in the house or café buildings. They are welcome in the café courtyard, shop, gardens, parkland and wider estate. Assistant dogs are welcome throughout the property. There are water bowls in the café courtyard and outside of the shop.
- Light levels in the house are kept low to maintain and protect the collection. We ask visitors to leave large bags in their cars or at the entrance of the Great Hall before entering the house. The same applies to buggies and strollers.
- There are 2 manual wheelchairs available for loan.
- There are no power assisted doors on the estate.
- The garden has a fountain in the North Garden and a small pond in the Yucca Garden.
- Along the east edge of the North Garden, there is a ha-ha with a 2m drop. This is not fenced.
- Induction loops are fitted in both visitor reception and the shop.

### Arrival & Parking Facilities

- The property is situated 3 miles south of the A303 London to Exeter Road.
- The car park is to the South of the house and is signposted.
- The main car park surface is mainly hard-standing with grass areas in the overflow section to the South of the hard-standing area.
- Blue badge holders may park in the spaces at the northeast area of the main car park in the designated parking bays, 25m from the visitor reception.
- Cycle racks are available in the main car park.
- Areas of the main car park are occasionally cordoned off for coach parking.

## WCs

- The only WCs are next to Visitor Reception, including wheelchair accessible WC (1980mm x 3500mm). The door, which opens inwards, is 940mm wide. An assistance alarm is fitted.
- There are no adult changing facilities but baby changing facilities are available here.
- All WCs have automatic hand driers, tiled floors and are well lit.
- There are no public toilets within the house.

## Visitor Reception

- The visitor reception is located in one of the original outbuildings to Montacute House, built of the same stone.
- The entrance door is non-power operated (approx. 87cm wide) and opens inwards to 90 degrees. There is a 3cm high threshold lip at this door. The Visitor Welcome team can assist with opening the door if required.
- The exit door is non-power operated (approx. 89cm wide) and opens inwards to 90 degrees. There is a 3cm high threshold lip at this door. The Visitor Welcome team can assist with opening the door if required.
- The flooring in this area is flagged stone surfaces and are easy to walk on or wheel over.
- There are 4 windows which provide natural light which is supplemented with LED lighting.
- The reception desks are 202cm high. There is a corner seat available behind the entrance
- Induction loops are fitted at both tills.

## House

- From the Visitor Reception, it is approximately 150m to the front door of the House, which is accessed via the East Door.
- There is ramped access via the West Door which is approximately 75m from the Visitor Reception.
- The route is marked by a welcome sign outside the reception. There is a flat, gravelled path to the entrance with one ramp down into the East Court. There are then 6 wide shallow steps up to a paved area and 4 more steps into the entrance to the house. The entrance door is 1470mm wide.
- It takes around 2-3 minutes to walk from the Visitor Reception to the East Door to the house.
- For wheelchair, mobility scooters and pushchairs users, a ramped entry point is available at the old front door on the West side of the house. This entrance is 70m from the visitor reception on paved and gravel paths. The door is 1000mm wide.
- Please ring the bell for access and staff will open the door and assist if required. This gives access opposite the other entrance door, so that visitors arrive at the same point in the house to start their visit. The ramp is 2400mm in length and its capacity is 250kg.
- The gradient of the ramp is steeper than DDA recommendations.
- There are 3 floors in the house – ground, first and second. The 2 upper floors are only accessible by staircase. There are 33 steps to reach the first floor and 31 steps between the first and second floors. The staircase is used to descend and is made up of 65 steps. The steps are shallow but uneven. There are handle rails in the staircase, but these do have breaks in them. Each floor has more than one level with steps between the levels.
- The ground floor only is accessible to wheelchair users. The floor surfaces are a mixture of wood and stone flags. There are different levels on the ground floor with ramp access

to the Parlour and Drawing Room; however, there are three steps with no ramp access into the Dining Room.

- The House is naturally lit, although light levels in some areas are kept low for conservation reasons. The Parlour on the ground floor has no soft furnishing and may echo. There are wooden benches throughout the House for visitors to sit; however, they do not have armrests. There are no toilets in the House.
- There are volunteers in the majority of rooms, but not in every one.

## Catering

- The café is located close to visitor reception (approximately 32m). The ground surface between reception and the café is flagged pavestones, which are uneven in places. There is a slight left turn to enter into the walled courtyard where the café is located. The narrowest point as you enter is 900mm.
- The door to the larger of the two cafes (to the right) is 900mm and the counter height is 890mm. There is no lower counter level. There is a slight raised threshold as you go through the door. The door to the smaller of the two cafes (to the left) is 1020mm and the counter height is 860mm. There is no lower counter level.
- Catering staff will assist visitors as required. The lighting in both cafés is a mixture of natural and fluorescent light. Menus are only available in standard print. Straws are also available. The width between the tables varies depending on visitor group numbers. The cafés have hard surfaces, which can make them quite noisy. They are situated off a large courtyard area, which contains tables and seating.

## Retail

- The shop is adjacent to visitor reception. The entrance has two steps, and the door is 840mm wide. It is manually opened inwards, but staff can assist. The shop can also be accessed via its exit, by returning through visitor reception and entering via the carpark, a distance of approximately 42m. The exit is made up of double doors 1360mm in width.
- The ground surface between visitor reception and the shop exit is a mixture of concrete and paving.
- The counter at the till points has two levels, the higher level is 950mm and the lower level is 760mm. Induction loops are available. Staff can assist by reaching down items to view if they cannot be reached by customers and with pricing information. Circulation space between display stands is usually 1000mm.

## Garden

- Much of the garden is on level ground. All visitors are able to see the North Garden, the Orangery, East Court (ramped access), Cedar Lawn and the West Drive with ease.
- Surfaces offer a combination of gravel and flat stone paving paths, which are relatively easy to wheel over. Most of the gravel paths are compacted 'Breedon' style gravel, but some have a dressing of loose aggregate, such as small gauge gravel.
- There are some steps around the gardens. In East Court small ramps have been installed over the steps, which have a gentle gradient. Steep stone steps lead down into the sunken area of North Garden and these have stone balustrades, which act as handrails for those that can access this area. However, all this area can be seen from the surrounding level paths.

- The Icehouse is accessed via steep steps and narrow squeeze gaps through a wall and historic fence. It is not accessible to wheelchair users.
- There is a flight of wide, shallow and uneven steps that lead down into a family picnic/play area. There is also a path down to this area that is accessible to wheelchair users. However, one part of this path is quite steep, and it may prove hard for anyone unaccompanied to get back up the path.
- There is a fountain in the centre of the sunken area of North Garden, which has a high stone balustrade surrounding it. There is also a small sunken round dipping pond in the Yucca Garden, which is unfenced.
- There are plenty of benches and seats provided throughout the gardens. There are picnic benches available in Farmer's Piece and the Family Picnic Area. There are planting plans available, but no tactile model or audio tour. The parkland does not have made/gravel paths, it only has footpaths.

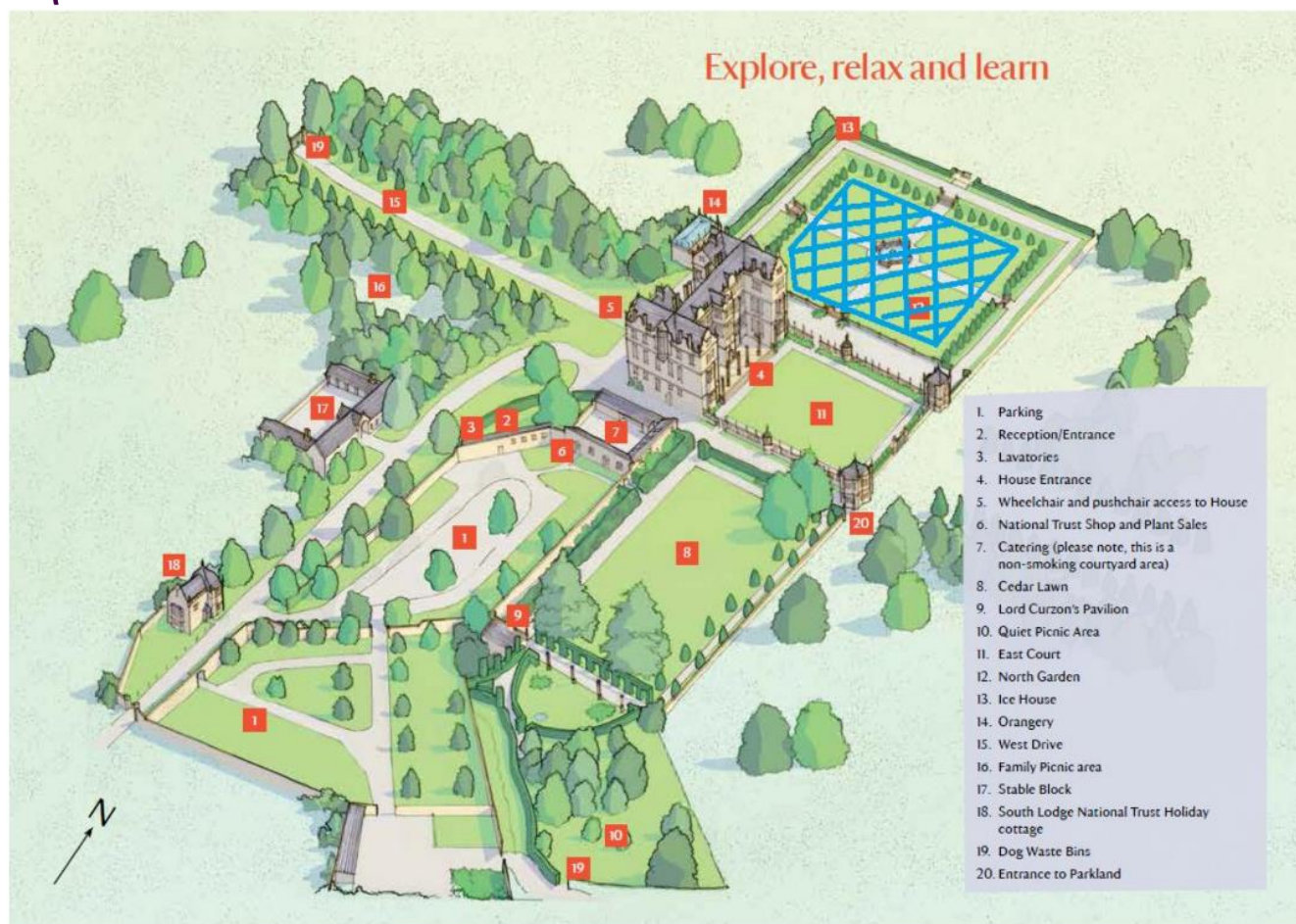
## Contact details for more information

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## Map

**Please see the below map for the area of the garden that is not wheelchair accessible.**



The area marked in bright blue hatching is not accessible to wheelchair users.