

Acorn Bank Access Statement

Temple Sowerby

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INTRODUCTION

- Acorn Bank House dates from 16th century with the majority of the house being built in 17th century. The rooms open to the public are spacious however there is no visitor access to the first floor. The estate is varied however there are paths through the woodland towards the watermill, the gypsum mine and engine shed, and down to Crowdundle Beck. The path gradients vary and there are several steep paths throughout the woodland. We would not recommend the

use of wheelchairs on these areas, although some can be accessed by tramper.

- Our tramper is available to use free of charge. The tramper can be booked in advance using the contact details above, otherwise it is used on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Access through the woods to the watermill is possible however only the interpretation room of the mill is accessible.
- Mobile phone reception varies throughout the site dependant on the service provider, however coverage is sufficient across the majority of the property to allow network use. The contact number for visitors on site is 017683 61893/07825606926.
- Assistance dogs are welcome in all areas of our property. Access for dogs into the formal walled gardens is prohibited however well-behaved dogs on leads are welcome in the woodlands, and on leads throughout our wider estate. Dogs are welcome inside the café, and in the café courtyard.

ARRIVAL & PARKING FACILITIES

- Acorn Bank is conveniently located for access from A66, A6 and M6 via car. The property lies 7 miles east of Penrith and 8 miles west of Appleby-in-Westmorland, just a short drive from A66. The property is signposted from the main A66 route.
- There are 3 designated disabled car parking bays and are located 20m from the entrance to the property in the disabled car park.
- The surface of the disabled parking bays and carpark is small grade gravel and is uneven in some areas.
- There are no transfer vehicles available.

- The main visitor car park currently has space for 78 cars. The surface is firm with a top layer of gravel held together with a plastic grid system. The car park is 250m from the property entrance over level ground. Overflow parking is available adjacent to the designated car park. Distance from property is 360m.
- The car park entrance is accessible 500 yards from a triangular junction with Milburn Road, Temple Sowerby. There are brown signs from this junction and a large Welcome to Acorn Bank entrance sign next to the front gates, which are left open during opening hours. The road up to the car park from the front gate is tarmacked and a smooth surface. There are 3 marked designated spaces for disabled people past the payment hut over the cattle grid, towards the house.



Photo of footpath from car park and payment hut, disabled parking where the green van is situated.

- Payment is made at the Shepherd's Hut, located at the end of the footpath leading out of the main car park. A hearing loop is available

here. The cost includes the whole property (house, gardens and estate), and National Trust members get in free.

ACCESSIBLE TOILETS AND BABY CHANGING

- The Place to Change accessible toilet is located within the courtyard, 10m from the tearoom, and is fitted with an emergency alarm.
- The Place to Change toilet is 2.5m x 3m
- The changing facilities for children and babies are located adjacent to the Changing Places toilet.
- As of 2023 we have a new Place to Change facility equipped with hoist and bed. More details can be found below

<http://changingplaces.uktoiletmap.org/find?toiletLocation=Temple%20Sowerby,%20Penrith%20CA10%201SP>

- Both the Place to Change toilet and the baby changing facilities are lit by one window in each area. There is also additional non-fluorescent lighting.

HOUSE

- The property is 50m from visitor reception (the shepherd's hut).
- Paths to the property are fine grade gravel on a level surface.
- The entrance to the property is on the same level as the paths and there are no steps/ gradients. The doorstep is a 2cm lip.

- The entrance door is operated manually and can be opened to its full width of 1.2m if required. Visitor Reception and Bookshop volunteers are available to assist upon request.
- There are no other entrance doors to the house.
- The entrance hall is floored with large stone flags. The bookshop is carpeted.
- The area is lit naturally by large windows however on duller days there is LED lighting to illuminate.
- There are no narrow corridors to negotiate.
- All areas have sufficient space to negotiate with a wheelchair.
- There are two seats within the entrance hall for visitors to use. They are softly padded and have arms. There is a sofa available for use in the drawing room on the ground floor. Visitors are also welcome to sit on windowsills.
- There is a second-hand bookshop on the ground floor during open hours.
- The toilets are located adjacent to the tearoom.
- We allow all manually and battery-operated wheelchairs within the ground floor of the house.
- The property has 2 manual wheelchairs available to borrow. Pre-booking is advised.

THE CAFÉ

In 2023 the café facility will be provided by a private concession from a mobile unit located in the courtyard.

- The café is 360m from the car park.
- There are two entrances to the café:
 - Entrance through a door in the front courtyard, at ground level up a slight ramp. The path to the entrance is level and consists of small grade gravel.
 - The café may also be accessed via the stable courtyard. The distance from the car park is 80m over small grade gravel.
- Both entrance doors are wood manual operated doors that open inwards towards the café. The doors are left open on fine days but may be closed on windy or wet days. Café staff are available to assist upon request.
- Outside seating is available in the courtyard that is on level ground and accessed via small grade gravelled paths.
- Outdoor tables can be accessed are wheelchair accessible.
- The front courtyard entrance door is 92cm wide, and the stable courtyard entrance door is 84cm wide.
- The café floor is surfaced with wooden floorboards.
- The café is lit by two large windows. There is additional lighting which consists of hanging energy saving lights.

- The café is located on the ground floor.
- There are no narrow corridors.
- The café has enough room to manoeuvre a wheelchair and areas can be easily adapted by moving tables and chairs if required.
- The toilets are located in the corridor outside the tearoom. The accessible toilet is located across the courtyard 15m from the cafe.
- Menus are not available in large print or braille however staff are available to assist visitors on request.
- The serving counter at the mobile serving unit in the courtyard is 1.5m high. Staff are very willing to facilitate service where needed.
- Allergen information is available for all items that we sell. Please let café staff know of any allergens or dietary requirements.

SECOND HAND BOOKSHOP

- The second-hand bookshop is 350m from the car park.
- The second-hand bookshop is on the ground level inside Acorn Bank mansion, and there are no steps to the entrance. There is a small lip on the floor of 2cm.
- The entrance door is manually operated and opens inwards. The door is kept open during opening hours.
- There are no alternative entrances to the bookshop.
- The entrance door is 1.2m wide.

- The entrance hall is stone flagged however the main shop area is carpeted.
- The shop is lit by natural light and LED lighting.
- There is the required circulation space of 1200mm available around stands

GARDEN

- Assistance dogs are welcome in all parts of the garden.
- Well-behaved dogs on leads are welcome in the woodland, but not in the Enclosed Garden.
- The enclosed gardens are mostly flat and composed of 4 connected spaces.
- All areas of the enclosed garden are accessible to wheelchair users.

1. The Terrace and Stable Courtyard:

- The paths in this area are level and surfaced with fine gravel.
- Benches for seating are positioned at the main door to the house and in the stable courtyard.



- The stable courtyard contains the working tool store, machine store and byre for the garden and estate team. Access to the contents of these rooms is discouraged by keeping these doors closed when staff or volunteers are not using them.
- There is an access to the café via a gently sloping concrete ramp from the Stable Courtyard.

2. The Walled Garden:

- The walled garden is accessible from 4 different gates, which are unlocked and opened before the property opens to visitors.
- The gate to the woodland and the gate to the Top Orchard have stone steps with no handrail, while the gates to the Terrace and to the Herb Garden are level.
- There is a combination of fine gravel paths and grass paths.
- Grass is kept short on the paths to facilitate access.

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- Occasionally following heavy or persistent rain the grass paths will be closed to conserve the grass surface.
- The ground is mostly level with some very gentle slopes.
- There is a bench for seating at the southern end of the Lily Border and in the Yew Hedge niche.



3. Greenhouse:

- Access to the Greenhouse is via stone steps from the Walled Garden, or via a gently sloping flagged ramp from the Herb Garden.



4. The Herb Garden:

- Entry through a gate from the Walled Garden, the Herb Garden is well serviced by a network of fine gravel paths between the beds of herbs.
- A gate at the southern end of the Herb Garden leads to the Top Orchard.
- Seating is placed outside the Greenhouse and under the Quince Tree in the middle of the Herb Garden and at the southern end of the Herb Garden.



5. The Top Orchard:

- The paths in the Top Orchard are all grass, which is kept short. These may be closed occasionally following heavy or persistent rain to conserve the grass surface.
- The ground is mainly flat or gently sloping, allowing access to the fruit trees, cordons and vegetable beds.
- In the south west corner there is an enclosed apiary. Access to this is discouraged by fencing and a gate to reduce the risk of stings to visitors.
- There is a gate to the Herb Garden and to the woodland both of which are accessible.
- There is also a gate from the Top Orchard to the Walled Garden which is down 3 stone steps, with no handrail.



6. The Sunken Garden:

- The Sunken Garden is accessed through a doorway from the stable courtyard or through a wide cast iron gate.
- Paths are flagged, and the grass in this area is kept short.
- The ground can become very soft following rain and may be occasionally closed to conserve the grass.

- There is a flight of stone steps with no handrail leading to the Walled Garden.
- There is a gently sloping grass ramp to the first terrace and stone steps with no hand rail to the second terrace.
- In the centre of the Sunken Garden there is a pond which is 0.8m deep. There is no barrier around the pond.
- There is a bench for seating.



COUNTRYSIDE

- Access from the car park to the start of the walks is through a wooden gate found opposite the shepherd's hut. The surface along to both the mill and the gypsum mine on the top path is compacted gravel. There are benches situated along this route to rest and take in the tranquillity of the woodland. The paths through the bottom woodland along the river, are down quite a steep slope and can be slippery if wet.



Photo: Path leading down to the wild play area and the bottom woodland

- The surface at the top of the slope is firm with a gravel covering, progressing to a firm surface underneath a general covering of leaves and some vegetation.
- The route down to the weir is down a number of steps with no handrail, again the surface is gravel.



Photo: Steps leading down to the weir and river walk

- There is a public footpath which crosses the property and is accessed via a step-over stile at the northern end and through a kissing gate at the southern end.
- This path also takes you across agricultural land that is used by grazing livestock; please keep your dog on a lead throughout.



Photos: The step-over stile and kissing gate out of the property along the public footpath

- There is a cafe in the stable courtyard of the mansion from Thursday to Monday. There are some toilet facilities, including an accessible toilet / 'Place to Change' in the same courtyard.

Routes

- The easiest route to access for wheelchair users, avoiding steep slopes, is the top footpath which stretches right from the Watermill at the West end of the property to the Gypsum mines in the East end of the property. It is advised that wheelchair users do not attempt the riverside wildlife walks as these contain steep slopes and/or steps.
- A tramper is available free-of-charge from the shepherd's hut. Accessible routes around the woodland for the tramper are marked on the visitor map. It is advisable to book the tramper in advance by emailing acornbank@nationaltrust.org.uk

Bottom woodland walks

- To get to the bottom woodland there are steep slopes which are gravelled. Once there, there are a couple of wooden bridges over the mill leat, which have metal slip protection on the planks.



Photo: Slope leading from the main footpath



Photo: One of a series of wooden bridges over the mill leat



The river walk

- To get to the river walk, you need to negotiate several gravelled steps. The route takes you along the revetment walk alongside the river. There is a drop of 1.5m to the water from the path. When the river is in spate, this path will be closed off to the public for safety reasons. To return to the top woodland paths you will need to go up either a steep slope along the public footpath or up several more steps.



Photo: Riverside walk path

The wildlife hide

- The wildlife hide can be found waymarked from the main path to the Gypsum mine. This route takes you through a gate and across agricultural land used for grazing sheep. The ground is uneven and can be muddy and wet at times. The hide is accessed through another gate and down a gently sloped, gravel path which is quite often covered in leaves.



Photo: The path leading down to the wildlife hides

The Parkland Loop Path

A mown grass path which takes the user across the field from the woodland to the wildlife hide, then north towards the house, returning to the welcome point at the Shepherd's Hut. The path is mown grass and in some areas becomes very soft after rain. There may be livestock grazing – please keep dogs on leads at all times.

THE WATERMILL

The watermill is operated by the Acorn Bank Watermill Trust, an independent body.

- The watermill is situated 350m from the reception hut along a level, compacted gravel footpath. The door to the upper mill rooms is always open when the property is open, there is however a small lip to the door frame.



Photo: Upper mill room door

- The room inside has floor boards and no furnishings, this therefore causes echoes. The lighting is poor with very little natural light, only being provided by the door and an artificial bulb.
- There is a large step in the kiln room with a handrail. There is room to turn a wheelchair and the mobility vehicle. There are benches provided for visitors to use, but they don't have armrests.
- The lower mill rooms are accessed down 12 steep, narrow steps and down narrow corridor. The courtyard is cobbled and irregular. There is a flat bench to sit on.
- The lower mill room has a large step down. The mill wheel is accessed through a wide room with flagstone floor, across a wooden platform and down 3 more steps. None of this area is accessible with the tramper.



Photo: Access to lower mill rooms down 12 steps



Photo: Narrow corridor leading to mill courtyard



Photo: Cobbled courtyard



Photo: Lower mill room



Photo: Access to the wheel

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