

# Coleridge Cottage Access Statement

Georgian Cottage and former home of poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, located on the main street of the village of Nether Stowey, Somerset at the base of the Quantock Hills.

## Contact Details

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## Introduction

1. The property is located on the main street of the village and there is no footway directly in front of the cottage, but there is on the opposite side of the road and the footway on the near side leads directly to the entrance of the cottage.
2. Mobile phone reception at the cottage, and in the village, is very poor. The site is compact, and any emergencies can quickly be brought to the attention of staff and volunteers, who can call the emergency services from the office landline.
3. Assistance dogs are welcome throughout the site. Dogs are allowed in the garden, which can be accessed to the side without going through the cottage. A water bowl is available in the garden and can be topped up on request.
4. Light levels can be low in the building, especially in autumn and winter and on dull days, as there is minimal electric lighting in the main show rooms. There are large windows in each room which provides natural daylight.
5. Steps are the only means of access and exit from the house, so visitors need to be able to manage these independently.
- 6. There are no induction loops in the Cottage.**
7. The cottage interpretation includes some sudden sounds. These include recordings of a crying baby, footsteps, and singing on the historic landing beside the bedroom, which is also audible from the Second Parlour and the upstairs rooms. There is also a motion sensor poetry recitation in the Interpretation Room, which activates when the visitor steps into the room.

## Arrival & Parking Facilities

1. Coleridge Cottage is signposted with a brown sign in both directions on the A39 from Bridgwater to Minehead. There is also a small brown NT oakleaf sign near the Post Office in Nether Stowey, visible to those entering the village from the Bridgwater direction. The Cottage itself is located on Lime Street. A hanging sign is easily visible to visitors approaching from the East and a separate sign is provided on the end wall of the property when approaching from the west on Lime Street, directing you towards the car park.
2. There is no dedicated car parking, disabled or otherwise, at Coleridge Cottage. However, visitors can park in the car park for the Ancient Mariner pub, which is located directly opposite the property, courtesy of the pub owners. Alternative car parking is available in the village car park on Castle Street, which is 500 yards away. The National Trust is not responsible for either of these car parks. Limited local street parking may also be available along Lime Street.

## WC

1. There is one WC for visitor use, which has a single step at the entrance. The floor is tiled, and the room is lit with fluorescent lighting. This WC is not accessible.

2. There are no adult or baby changing facilities.

## Entrance and Welcome

1. Entrance to the site from the street is via three stone steps onto a pedestrian cobbled path, which visitors are required to walk on for approx. 5m before reaching the front door, which is accessed by a further two stone steps. There is no ramp provision. There are handrails in place at both sets of steps.
2. The front door is 870mm wide and is left open during opening hours. The inner lobby door is also left open unless the weather is wet, or it is very cold. If the inner door is closed, visitors are required to manually operate the latch to open it.
3. The whole of the ground floor is tiled or carpeted. All internal doors are wooden and remain open during the day.
4. There is no reception desk in the typical sense – visitors are welcomed in the first of the show rooms and payment is taken or membership cards are checked standing up. There are two seats available in the Welcome Parlour. There are no storage facilities. The width of the door into the Welcome Parlour is 780mm, therefore this room is unsuitable for wheelchair access.
5. There is an Access Folder in the Welcome Parlour, which contains information and images for those who are unable to access the upstairs rooms. Braille and large print guides are also available.



Steps from street to front cobbles



Steps up to the front door

## Ground Floor

1. There are six rooms accessible to visitors on the ground floor. These are: Welcome Parlour, Second Parlour, Sara's Kitchen, Shop, WC, and Tearoom. The flooring of the Welcome Parlour, Sara's Kitchen, Second Parlour, WC and hallway are tiled. The shop floor is carpeted. The tearoom floor is a mix of brick pavers and cobbles. There are limited soft furnishings in each room so hard noises will produce echoes.
2. The doorway into the Second Parlour is 800mm.
3. The doorway into the Shop is 810mm.
4. The doorway into Sara's Kitchen is 730mm wide.
5. Due to the narrow corridor, (700mm wide), unfolded wheelchairs cannot access the tearoom

and non-accessible toilet from the house. Wheelchair users may be able to access the Tearoom via the cobbled slopes into and around the garden and step. To access the Tearoom from the main house, is a distance of around 5 metres (15 feet) from the front end of the narrow corridor to the Tearoom at the rear of the building.

6. There is limited artificial lighting on the ground floor to create the atmosphere that Coleridge would have known. Rooms are lit by natural light and low impact mains operated lights. Light levels can be low if it is an overcast day, and during autumn and winter.
7. Visitors can sit on any seat they see. There are seats in all the ground floor rooms, apart from the shop.
8. It is not guaranteed that a member of staff or volunteer will be present in each room, but as a rule at least the Welcome Parlour and Tearoom will be staffed as a minimum.
9. There are two staircases for accessing the first floor. The visitor route suggests that visitors use the spiral staircase in the Second Parlour to ascend. This consists of 11 steep, winding wooden steps, each approximately 220mm high. There is a handrail. Visitors with limited mobility are encouraged to use the second staircase (nominally the 'down' staircase), located between the Shop and Sara's Kitchen. This consists of 12 steps to a landing, and then a further four steps around the corner. The steps are approximately 150mm high and are carpeted. There is a wooden banister.
8. As the cottage and its rooms are small, to ensure a good visit for everyone, we may need to ask visitors to wait at times when we are busy.

## **First floor**

1. There are four visitor rooms on the first floor. These are: Bedroom, Exhibition Room, Reading Room and Interpretation Room. There are seats in each of these rooms for visitors to make use of, apart from the Exhibition Room.
2. The floor of the Bedroom and the landing area outside it are wooden. The Bedroom floor has a slight slope to it. The other three rooms are carpeted.
3. The upstairs rooms are not generally staffed.
4. There is a fire door separating the Reading Room and Interpretation Room from the Bedroom and Exhibition Room. Visitors are required to manually open this door. If opening the door from the Bedroom side, there are three wooden steps up to it, each approximately 200mm high. A handrail is in place. If opening the door from the Reading Room side, access is level and the steps need to be descended to access the other two rooms.

## **Catering**

1. Visitors enter the Tearoom through a doorway that is approximately 770mm wide. The door is always open during the day and is low level, so taller persons are to mind their head.
2. There is a step change in the level of the Tearoom floor. The primary area consists of brick tiles and there is a step of 120mm onto the higher level. The surface changes here to cobbles. Visitors will need to navigate this step if they wish to access the garden.
3. The roof of the Tearoom is constructed of corrugated plastic which allows a lot of natural light. There are two electric lights above the serving hatch, although these are only used if natural light levels are low.
4. There are no soft furnishings in the Tearoom and hard noises will echo.
5. There is a serving hatch with a fixed counter 1.4m from the ground. Staff can always assist with serving customers.
6. Circulation between the tables is narrow.
7. Straws are available but there is no large-handled crockery or double-handled cups.



Tearoom step and level change

## Retail

1. The shop is entered from the main cottage hallway and the door is always left open.
2. Display cabinets primarily line the walls, and there is space in the middle of the room 1650mm by 2600mm.
3. The counter is fixed at 900mm high. The shop is not always staffed but there is a bell for visitors to ring. Staff can reach items down for customers.
4. There is no large print price list, but staff can assist customers with the prices of objects.

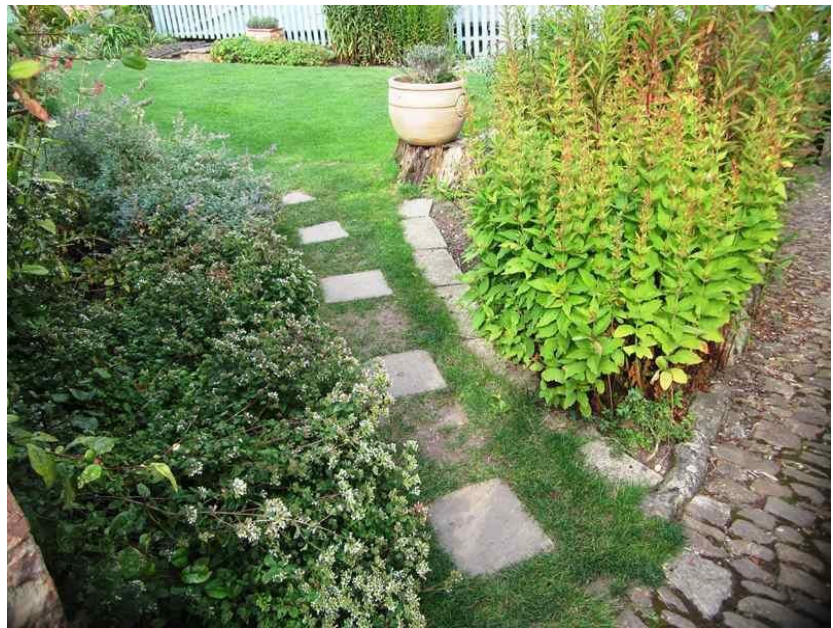
## Garden

1. The garden is divided into two areas: the cottage garden and the wildflower garden. Step-free access to the gardens is via a side entrance gate, although the path to the gardens is steep and uneven. There is no step free access from the cottage to the gardens as the step in the Tearoom must be navigated.
2. From the Tearoom, the path leading into the garden is cobbled and steep, and can be slippery when wet, so visitors are advised to take care. A handrail runs along the side of this slope.
3. The cottage lawn can be accessed by steps directly outside the Tearoom or by level access at the top of the cobbled path.
4. The wildflower garden is at the top of the cobbled path. A narrow path is mown into the lawn to guide visitors around the garden.
5. There are three audio posts in the garden, accompanied by benches.
6. There are no gates or barriers to navigate once visitors are in the garden, except if they wish to exit via the side, rather than through the cottage.
7. The Garden Room is accessed from the cottage lawn. The wooden door is kept open. Internally the floor is vinyl. There are no soft furnishings to absorb noises and the room is lit with spotlights. An audio-visual programme plays in this room, with ambient outdoor sounds.
8. The Well Courtyard is accessed directly off the Tearoom and has level access. The floor of the courtyard is brick and has a slight incline.





Garden access from Tea Room



Level access to cottage lawn



Wildflower garden with mown paths



Side access path with gate

