

Stourhead Access Statement

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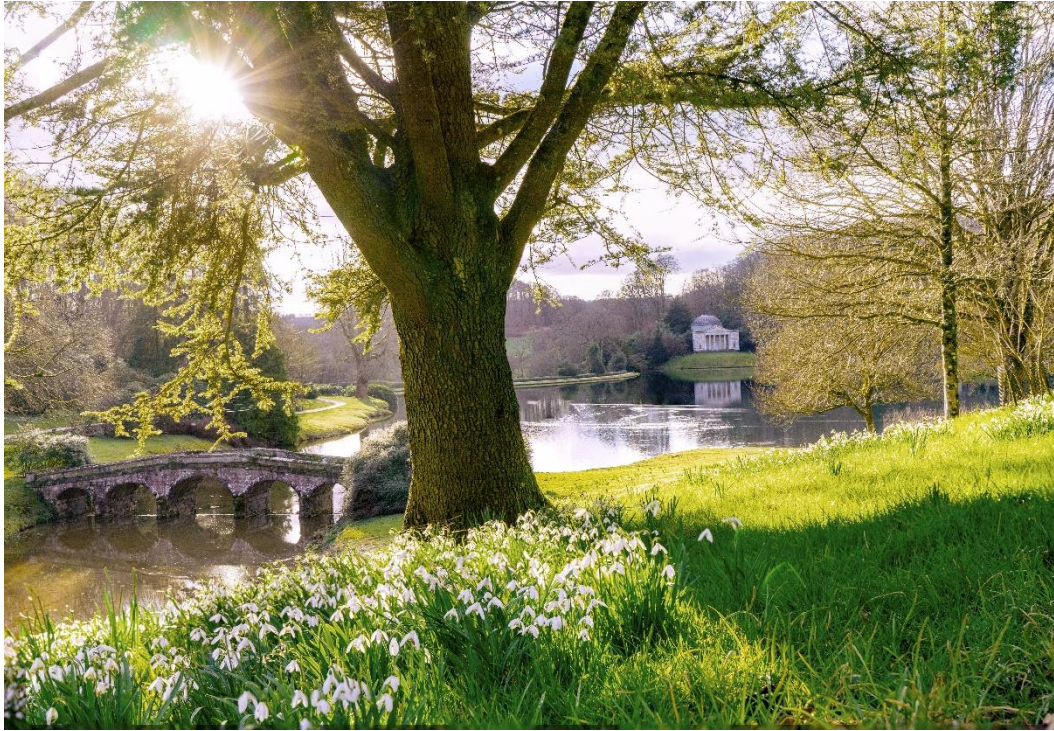


Figure 1 Photo of Stourhead lake, Palladian bridge and pantheon temple copyright NT images/Elizabeth Ogilvie

Introduction

Stourhead is one of the finest landscape gardens in the world. Designed by Henry Hoare II as a place to entertain, the garden was laid out between 1741 and 1780. The magnificent lake is central to this iconic garden of classical temples and follies. Its lakeside paths and backdrop of colourful, rare and exotic trees reveal many beautifully contrived vistas, capturing the imagination of visitors for over two centuries. While the garden seasons change in beautiful succession, the majestic Palladian mansion, originally home to the Hoare family, houses a unique collection of Chippendale furniture, magnificent paintings and an exquisite Regency library. Way-marked walks can be enjoyed across the chalk downland and woodland of the wider estate, which is managed for nature conservation.

Arrival & Parking Facilities

Stourhead is located 1.5 miles from the A303. There are brown signs directing visitors to Stourhead from the A303 and from the B3092.

Designated spaces for blue badge holders are signposted from the entrance to the car park. They are located within 50m of the visitor reception building. There are 17 tarmacked disabled parking bays with yellow hatchings. There are a further 6 tarmacked disabled parking bays in the Spread-Eagle car park, which are closer to the lakeside garden entrance. Parking for blue badge holders is always free.



Figure 2 Disabled parking in the main car park



Figure 3 Disabled parking in the Spread-Eagle car park

Car parking charges apply for non-members of the National Trust. The main car park is surfaced with tarmac and compacted gravel hard surface. During busy periods an overflow car park with a grass surface is used.

The main entrances to the garden and house are located approximately 500m away from the main car park in opposite directions.

WCs

Accessible toilets are located next to Visitor Reception in the courtyard, and also in the Spread-Eagle courtyard. These have emergency cords to which our Visitor Welcome team will respond. Automatic hand driers are provided in all WCs across the property. We do not have an adult changing table or hoist on the property. Both accessible WCs in the Spread Eagle Courtyard are right-hand transfer.



Figure 4 Disabled toilet next to Visitor Reception

Dogs

Assistance dogs are welcome in all areas of the property at all times. Dogs are welcome on the wider estate at all times but should be kept on a lead when appropriate. Dogs on short fixed leads can be walked in the landscape garden during open hours.

Phone signal and WIFI

Stourhead covers a large area where mobile phone reception can be patchy and poor. Staff are on property during our opening hours and can communicate about emergencies using radios. Depending on the nature of the problem or emergency we suggest you contact Visitor Reception on 01747 842030 (during property open hours) or dial 999. Public WIFI is available around Visitor Reception and in the Restaurant.

Admission

National Trust Members gain free admission with the presentation of a valid membership in their name. Essential companions are always free. Alternatively, tickets are available to purchase on arrival and there is no requirement to pre-book. Tickets are available for the whole-property only, off-peak admission is available during certain periods and at certain times, please ask at Visitor Reception or on arrival.

Visitor Reception

This modern stone-built building has double doors at the entry and exit points, stone floors and a vaulted ceiling with exposed wooden beams. Access to the visitor reception courtyard is down a steep paved slope and there is a level entrance and exit. The doors are manually opening and open outwards. Staff and volunteers are available to assist with opening the doors if required. Large windows at the front of the building provide natural light but the

overhanging roof design means that lux levels are not high. Natural light is supplemented by electric spotlights.

Figure 6 Image of the approach to visitor reception



Figure 5 Image of visitor reception

Sanitiser is available at till points and it is not mandatory to wear a mask or face covering. The welcome for all visitors is provided by staff and volunteers who stand behind the till points, or by volunteers who welcome visitors outside. Visitors are asked to check in at these till points and scan their membership cards or present their booking confirmation. All till points have a perspex screen.

We have hearing loops available at the till points, but acoustics can be poor inside Visitor Reception, compounded by the recent addition of perspex screens.

Mountain Trike wheelchairs and trampers to hire

We have two Mountain Trike wheelchairs available to borrow from visitor reception and also at the lakeside entry/exit point. We also have two trampers that are available to hire and these are to be collected from visitor reception only.

You can book these in advance by calling 01747 841152 or emailing stourhead.estate@nationaltrust.org.uk. If there are no bookings on the day you will be able to hire these on arrival.

Before hiring a mountain trike wheelchair or Trampler, you will be asked to complete a safety induction and leave your details with us. There is a weight limit of 15.7 stone/100kg for the Mountain Trike wheelchairs and a weight limit of 25 stone/159kg for the trampers.



Figure 8 Image of Mountain Trike wheelchairs



Figure 9 Image of what a trampler looks like

Extra advice for using a Trampler

The following requirements are essential for your safety:

- That the individual hiring and operating the trampler is over the age of 14.
- The recommended maximum weight to operate a Trampler is 25 stone (159kg). At specific sites this may be lowered slightly due to the characteristics of the terrain.
- You should be able to read a vehicle number plate from a distance of 6 metres and have no significant visual impairment that would prevent you from reading safety signs, avoiding obstacles or other hazards.
- You should have sufficient upper body strength, upper limb mobility and hand dexterity to grip both Trampler handlebar grips securely and operate the twist grip.

You should consult your doctor before using a Trampler if:

- You have a medical condition that causes / could cause seizures or convulsions; or that affects / could affect your memory, level of consciousness or alertness, balance, mood, or anxiety levels
- You have a history of back problems or spinal conditions

Learning difficulties or developmental conditions:

- Trampler users must have sufficient learning abilities to understand information presented by the instructor, be able to operate and safely control the Trampler, identify and avoid hazards, and to react to changes in the surrounding environment.

Extra advice for using a Mountain Trike wheelchair

A short safety instruction will be provided before borrowing a Mountain Trike wheelchair. However, here are some useful points of advice:

- Uphill – On steep climbs you can use the brakes to prevent roll back between pushes and make the climb easier. Take care to assess the climb and do not tackle slopes that are too steep for the abilities of the pusher.
- Downhill – Take care to progress gradually, build confidence and experience flat ground before trying downhills. Control your speed using the brakes and hold tight to the push handle. Avoid turning sharply across a slope.
- Braking – The brakes are powerful yet controllable, take time to familiarise yourself with the brakes on the flat before attempting slopes. For good control, try dragging the brakes gently rather than grabbing them suddenly.
- Steering – Simply move the push handle to the side to initiate a turn. You may find it easier to apply the brake on the wheel on the inside of the turn to make tight turns at low speed. E.g. apply the left brake to help with a tight left turn.

The Mountain Trike wheelchairs have been chosen for their ability to handle the terrain that you will find within the garden. However, the route is undulating and we recommend taking regular breaks at benches around the route to avoid the person pushing the Mountain Trike from becoming fatigued.

The main route around the garden is comprised of compacted or semi-compacted gravel paths – loose gravel may be present at the base of slopes.

MT push Transfer



1. Flip up footrest. Do not stand on footrest during transfer.



2. Stand close to Trike. If transferring chair to chair, push User's Chair as close as possible to the Trike.



3. Lift rear wheel off the ground using push handle



4. User sits back into seat or transfers from their existing Chair



5. Lower rear wheel gently onto the ground and flip footplate down

This includes travels over a variety of surfaces including compacted gravel, cobble stones, tar and chip, wooden bridges, and grass. The route takes visitors up towards the House with a steady incline - it then undulates and winds throughout the garden with some steep slopes and uneven steps, the light is not evenly distributed and some areas would be considered dark, this darkness and change in light levels is fundamental to the atmosphere and experience in the garden.

There is a defined circuit walk in the form of a pathway. The whole walk encompasses a grand lake of approx. 15 acres; the lake does have exposed banks and is deep in places.

Inside the house all showrooms are on one level and are accessed by a flight of steps. Within the house, for conservation reasons, light levels can be low. Visitors are asked to leave large bags at the entrance to the house.

Full details of the garden and house visitor routes are provided below. Unless otherwise stated all doors and pathways are wide enough for wheelchair access.

House

The Palladian mansion is located at the top of the property and is reached by using a humped-bridge leading through the Walled garden. It lies approximately 500m from the main car park. The tarmac and Breedon gravel drive is approximately 250m long and is up hill – a relatively shallow gradient but a long slope – with speed humps. 13 shallow stone steps are found at the entrance to the mansion. The double doors at the entrance to the house open manually inwards. Entrance Hall doors will be open at all times during opening hours to provide indoor ventilation.

A Baronmead Stairmate Major stairclimber is available to enable wheelchair users to access the house. We ask that this facility is booked in advance so that we can make sure sufficient trained operators are available – two trained members of the team are required to be present. Please call 01747 841152 to arrange your visit. Staff members operating the stairclimber will need to be in close proximity to the wheelchair user. Both the staff member and wheelchair user are asked to wear a mask unless medically exempt. The stairclimber will be sanitised before and after use. The mobile platform lift can carry all types of wheelchairs including powered wheelchairs – but the maximum weight which can safely be carried is 200kg (visitor and wheelchair). The platform is 76cm wide x 126cm long – we have occasionally seen wheelchairs which are too wide for the platform but this is an unusual occurrence. If you use a mobility scooter and wish to use the stairclimber to access the house we will have to ask you to transfer into one of our loan wheelchairs as scooters cannot be safely transported on the stairclimber.

You will need to reverse your chair onto the stairclimber platform. An integrated ramp is available and staff can provide assistance if required. The stairclimber has a tilting platform and climbs the stairs at an angle of 45 degrees, gradually levelling out as it reaches the top of the stairs. The stairclimber climbs the stairs backwards and descends them facing forwards. For your safety and comfort your wheelchair needs to sit as far back on the

stairclimber platform as possible. If your wheelchair has small guide wheels on its motor / battery which would stop the main wheels of your chair from touching the back of the platform you will be asked to remove / move them. Manual wheelchairs are available to borrow if you're unable to remove the guide wheels and are happy and able to transfer from one chair to another.

If you would like to see a film of the stairclimber in action please use the following link
<https://baronmead.com/portfolio/stairmate-major/>



Once inside the house all the showrooms are on one floor and there are no further steps. There are a variety of floor surfaces – marble, wooden floor boards, parquet, rugs and fitted carpets. The majority of rooms have some soft furnishings – either carpets, rugs, blinds, curtains or cushions.

No fluorescent bulbs are used in the showrooms. For conservation reasons light levels can be low and natural light is restricted through the use of blinds. This is supplemented by table lamps and standard lamps. Most rooms have no central light fittings. Three rooms have chandeliers.

The accessible route in the house includes all available rooms but requires alternative access. Please ask a volunteer to escort you through the Saloon to the Column Room when you get to that stage in your visit. Corridors and doors throughout the house are all wide and wheelchairs can be easily turned. Manual wheelchairs are available to use in the house – please ask a volunteer on duty in the Entrance Hall if you would like to borrow one and will be sanitised before and after each use. Seats for visitors are provided in the Library, Little Dining Room, Inner Hall, and Italian Room. Volunteers are on duty in each room and are happy to help.

WCs are provided in the basement of the house accessed via a small flight of shallow steps. Level access to the house WCs is available, please ask a volunteer to direct you. An accessible WC is also located in the Visitor Reception Courtyard.

Large print guides and braille guides are available from the Entrance Hall which will be sanitised before and after each use.

Catering

The main restaurant is within easy reach of the car park and visitor reception. It is accessed via a paved slope with a shallow gradient. Outdoor seating is provided in a paved courtyard area and a number of the wooden picnic benches have been adapted for wheelchair users.

Access to the main restaurant is level and the doors into the building are manually opened with power assist. The main entry doors into the retail and catering complex open both ways. The door into the main restaurant opens outwards, has a power assist button and staff can help with opening it if required. The restaurant is a single-storey modern building with plenty of natural light. The floor is stone tiled – the surface is uneven and care should be taken when inside the building. There are no soft furnishings in the restaurant. Inside the building wooden tables and chairs are provided – a large number of the seats have arms. None of the furniture is fixed to the ground and it can be rearranged as required. Staff will happily help with this.

The restaurant operates on an assisted-service basis. Counter heights are under 850mm. Staff will provide any assistance required. You are welcome to take a seat if you are experiencing difficulty queuing – alert a member of staff and they will come and take your order. There is circulation space of around 1200mm between the tables. Induction loops are provided at the till points. Menus are available in large print and straws are available. Circular picnic benches with umbrellas are provided in the courtyard outside the restaurant and a number of these are wheelchair accessible. The tables have a clearance of 670mm underneath them.

Additional catering is available from the Spread Eagle Inn and the Ice-Cream Parlour both of which are located in the Spread Eagle Courtyard. Neither are run by the National Trust but are operated by independent business partners.

Retail

The shop is located in the same building as our restaurant. Close to the car park and visitor reception it is accessed by a shallow, paved downward slope. Access into the lobby of the main building is level and the doors are manually opened with power assist. The main entry doors into the retail and catering complex open both ways. The door into the shop opens outwards, has a power assist button and staff can help with opening it if required. The shop is housed in a single-storey modern building with plenty of natural light. The floor is stone tiled – the surface is uneven and care should be taken when inside the building.

Circulation space between the display stands is tight but accessible for wheelchair users. The till point has a lowered counter and is fitted with an induction loop. Staff will happily assist by passing down items to be viewed if they cannot be reached by customers. All items are individually priced and staff will help with any enquiries including reading price labels.

Garden

All visitors to Stourhead are welcome to take a map to help them find their way around the property. Maps are also displayed at both garden entrances. This includes information regarding the location of steps and steep slopes. The lower garden walk around the lake is

recommended for wheelchair and motorised wheelchair users and for those with access needs. The lakeside circuit is just over 1 mile long. There are a number of paths in the upper garden where the gradient is too steep to allow for the safe use of domestic mobility scooters – the lower garden route is suggested.

The main route around the garden is comprised of compacted or semi-compacted gravel paths. There are also informal paths across lawns which are accessible during periods of dry weather.



Figure 10 Visitors using the Mountain trike in the gardens ©National Trust Images/Trevor Ray Hart

There are steps into and out of the Grotto and through the Rock Arch on the path up to the Temple of Apollo. There are also shallow steps on some of the paths leading down from the Shades in the top garden. Handrails are not provided but the stone either side of the Grotto and Rock Arch steps provides hand holds. Within the walled garden at the top end of the property there are a few stone steps leading from one garden compartment to another. The bottom walled garden compartment is fully accessible to wheelchair users but the top two compartments are more difficult to access.

Each of these garden buildings is a grade 1 listed structure and have not been adapted since they were built in the mid-eighteenth century. The Gothic Cottage and the Temple of Flora both have one step up to their front doors. The Pantheon and Temple of Apollo are both accessed by a small flight of stairs.

The only gate on the visitor route through the garden is at the main lakeside entrance – a member of the team is always on hand to open the gate if required. Some of the wider estate walks across the parkland venture out towards the Obelisk and on towards King Alfred's Tower. This walk is relatively level and although there are cattlegrids, large kissing gates are also provided. There are no stiles along this path, but visitors may encounter other stiles elsewhere on the wider estate.

Additional interpretation is available within the garden buildings and volunteer garden guides are available to answer questions. Over 60 benches are located around the main garden visitor route – mostly on the main paths. There are significant water features in the garden – a 15 acre lake lies at the heart of the garden. There are two smaller lakes within the garden. Within the walled garden is an enclosed protected dipping pond and there's a fountain at the south front of the house.

Contact details for more information

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06/04/2022 by J Flye