

## **Montacute House Access Statement**

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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 18<sup>th</sup> century lookout tower.

N.B Mobile reception throughout the house and grounds can be unreliable. If you encounter any difficulties please call the office number above as soon as you are able to. In case of an emergency call 999.

N.B Assistance dogs are welcome over the entire property. All other dogs are permitted in the gardens on the gravel paths only and provided they are kept on a short lead. They are welcomed throughout the park and wider estate. If signposted or if livestock are present, all dogs must be kept on short leads.

N.B Please note that for conservation reasons, light levels inside the House can be low. We ask visitors to leave large bags in their cars or at the entrance to the Great Hall before entering the House. The same applies to buggies and strollers.

### **Arrival & Parking Facilities**

The Property is situated three miles south of the A303 London to Exeter road. It is well signposted with Local Authority brown heritage signs placed at key junctions on the approach from there. There is a quiet approach to the House from the surrounding main roads. A good metalled road leads up to the property.

There are five designated mobility parking spaces 25m from the visitor reception area. During peak times, if all spaces are occupied, passengers can be dropped off adjacent to visitor reception whilst the driver parks in the main or overflow carpark. Parking for all visitors is available near the visitor reception and is on grass or hard surfaces. A second, overflow parking area is available a little further away.

No transfer vehicle is provided at Montacute, as the house and gardens are within close proximity to the car park.

## WCs

There is one accessible toilet located approximately 10m from Visitor Reception. The path from reception to the toilet is wide (approximately 1490mm). The accessible toilet cubicle is 1980 x 3500mm. The door, which opens inwards, is 940mm wide. An assistance alarm is fitted, and the cord has been extended to cover the skirting of two walls, so that it is easily reachable from a number of places. The door is fitted with a pull handle. There is no natural light in the accessible toilet. There are two wall mounted artificial lights that are switched on with a door activated light switch. The WC is right hand transfer.

There are no adult changing facilities. All WCs have automatic hand dryers and fluorescent lighting. There is a baby changing facility.

## Visitor Reception

The visitor reception is located in one of the original outbuildings to Montacute House, built of the same stone. There are two doors entering visitor reception. The first is 870mm and the second is 890mm. There is a turn of 90° between the first and second floor. The ground and floor surfaces are flagged stone, and are easy to walk on or wheel over. There is a large wheelchair friendly mat to help absorb wet, dirt & sound. Access is good, and flat, although the doorway out of reception is 880mm and visitors must turn 90° out through the exit. There is a gate that can be used offering access under staff supervision to the property, without the need to go through visitor reception. It is 890mm wide.

The reception desk is 900mm high. Staff will come round to talk to someone who cannot see over or reach up to the desk. There is a clipboard for someone to use to write on if they cannot reach the desk or they can use the membership recruitment table (a metal style patio table) which is 760mm high.

The area is well lit with LED spot lights and natural light from several windows. There are 4 metal patio style chairs for seating which do not have armrests. There is an induction loop at the reception/membership desk. Two manual wheelchairs are available for use at visitor reception on a first come, first served basis.

## House

The House is situated close to the car park and visitor reception. However, the main visitor entrance to the House is via East Court, which is approximately 150m from visitor reception. There is a flat, gravelled path with one ramp down into the garden in front of the House. 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.

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 three floors – ground, first and second. The two 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. A separate staircase is used to descend and is made up of 65 steps. The steps are shallow but uneven. There are handle rails in the staircases, 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 and the Old Kitchen on the ground floor have 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. iPads are available on the ground floor in the Old Kitchen, which contain guides, photos and tours of the upper floors.

## 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 an induction loop available at the till counter. 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. The 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 hand rails for those that can access this area. However, all of this area can be seen from the surrounding level paths.

The Ice House is accessed via steep steps and narrow squeeze gaps through a wall and historic fence. It is not accessible to wheelchair users.

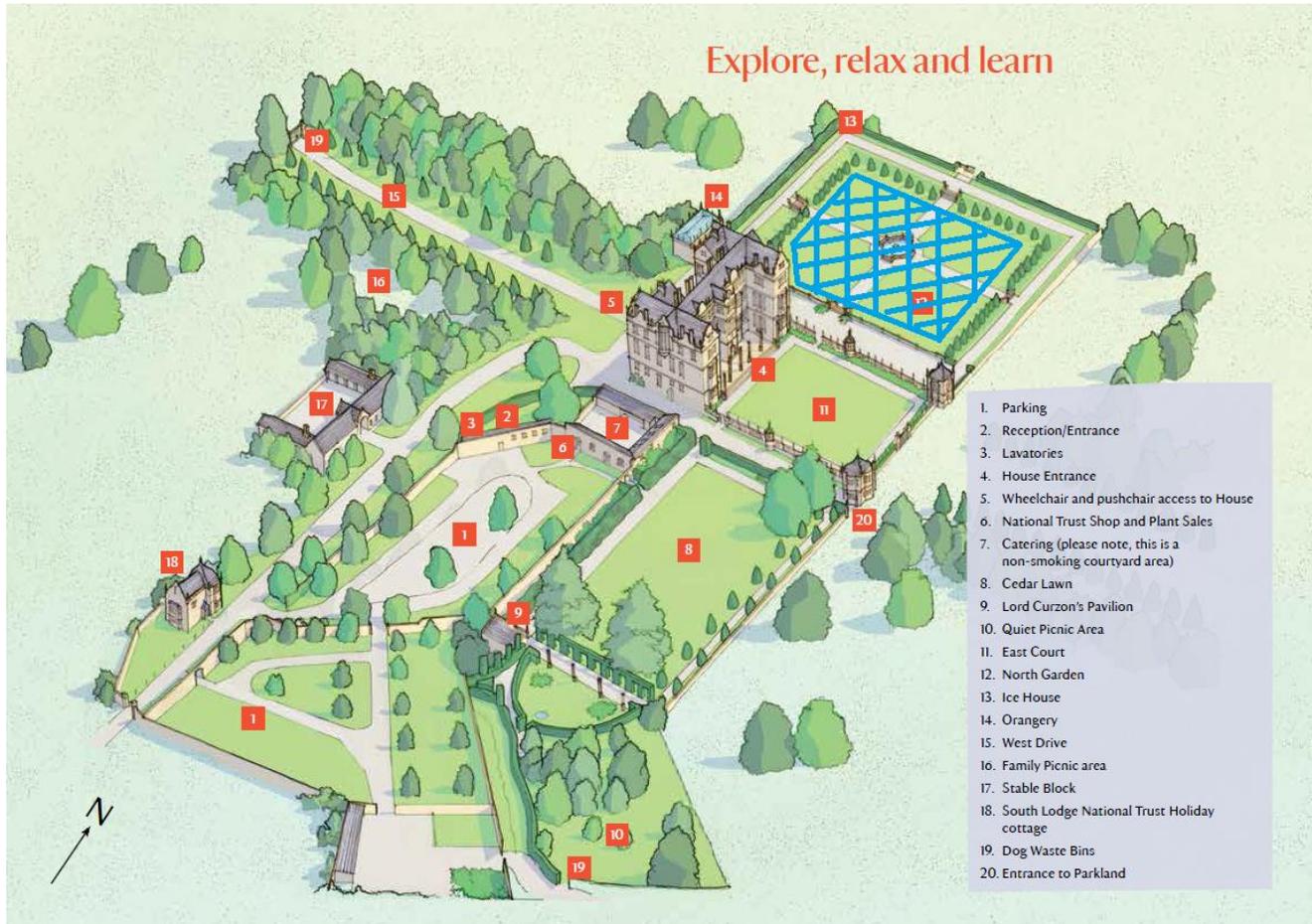
There is a flight of wide, shallow and uneven steps that lead down into a family picnic/play area. These do have a hand rail. There is also a path down to this area that is accessible to wheelchair users. However, one part of this path is quite steep and it may prove hard for anyone unaccompanied to 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 planting plans available, but no tactile model or audio tour. The parkland does not have made/gravel paths, it only has footpaths.

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

## Map



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