Wordsworth House and Garden access guide 2019

Wordsworth House and Garden, Main Street, Cockermouth CA13 9RX
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Points to note

Wordsworth House and Garden is William Wordsworth’s childhood home and is a Grade I listed building. It is presented as a living home, with limited written information in the house. There is no café. It is in the centre of Cockermouth, a small market town with many shops and places to eat. All visitor facilities at the property are in close proximity to each other.

- There is access for wheelchairs to the garden, the first floor of the house and the upstairs discovery room. There is no wheelchair access to the second floor of the house or the small cellar on the visitor route.

- Due to fire safety assessments we can have only one wheelchair user in the house and upstairs discovery room. We can have a second wheelchair user in the house and upstairs discovery room if they have enough mobility to use stairs in an emergency. This is because we are allowed only one lift journey in a fire evacuation.

- Mobile reception is good at the site. Visitors may call 01900 824805 if they have a problem, but it is rare that a member of the team will not be nearby to assist.

- Assistance dogs are welcome. All other dogs may wait with owners in the front courtyard. There is seating available and a water bowl outside reception, which is refilled regularly or can be filled on request.
Light levels are low on dark days and especially in March and October/November because there is only limited lighting, as there would have been in Georgian times.

We ask that large bags and rucksacks are left in the downstairs discovery room lockers.

Arrival and parking facilities

There are brown signs to show the location of the house.

There is no on-site parking due to the property's central location. There is disk parking on Main Street and in town; time disks are available from the site and local shops.

Wakefield Road is the nearest car park. This is on the opposite side of the river. It is a flat, 300-metre walk across the footbridge to Wordsworth House and Garden.

Blue Badge holders may use local public car parks or designated on-street spaces, free of charge, provided they park wholly in a clearly marked bay, display their valid Blue Badge and a properly adjusted time disk. They can use a specific disabled bay, or one available to the general public, for up to three hours.

Toilets

The property has one wheelchair accessible toilet in the back courtyard. It has baby changing but not adult changing facilities. The door is 85cm wide and the room measures 268cm by 190cm. It is a left-hand transfer toilet. It is well lit with natural light and has uplighters on the walls. It has paper towels but no hand drier. The floor is tiled.
The ladies' toilets are in the back courtyard and have well-lit, spacious cubicles with doors that are 82cm wide. The entry door is 74cm wide. There are paper towels but no hand drier. The floor is lino. Space outside the cubicles is limited as the building is small.

The gents' toilet is in the back courtyard. It has a cubicle with a door that is 69cm wide. The entry door is 74cm wide. There is also a urinal. It has paper towels but no hand drier. The floor is lino.

There are no other toilets on the site.

Visitor reception

Visitor reception has a tiled floor. Access is through the front door, which is 93cm wide and has a button for assisted opening. The visitor route is then out through an electric door, which measures 121cm wide and opens automatically. The front courtyard you enter onto is cobbled, but it has a bricked section on the right-hand side for wheelchair users.

The reception desk is 90cm high. Staff are always happy to come out from behind the desk to assist.

There is natural light in reception and electric lighting.

There is an induction loop at the reception desk.

Two manual wheelchairs are available for visitor use. These do not need to be pre-booked. Motor powered vehicles are not allowed in the house due to their weight and the health and safety risk with historic floors.
A variety of things are available in reception to enhance visits and these are free for people with access needs. These include audio tours, a braille version of the guidebook, our current exhibition catalogue and loanable floor plans. Visitors can buy guidebooks and souvenir floorplans to keep. A portable induction loop is available on request.

The downstairs discovery room (next to reception)

- The entrance to the downstairs discovery room is up a slight slope. There are electric doors but these are fixed open. A second entrance door is 83cm wide and usually propped open, except in very bad weather. If it is closed, a member of the team is on hand to open it. The downstairs discovery room can also be accessed through the rear of visitor reception, through an entrance measuring 88cm.

- The floor is uneven. A short, sharp slope leads into the wash house. There is a platform lift here to access the first floor of the house and the upstairs discovery room.

- Chairs are available in this room, with and without armrests.

- A folder with information about and images of the top floor of the house and current exhibition is available here. There is also a permanent display on Wordsworth’s life and legacy. In addition, this room has a magnetic storytelling game, books and children’s activities.

- Access to the toilets and garden is through the wash house. There is a manual door, which is 95cm wide. This is open in nice weather. If it is closed, a member of the team will be happy to assist.
House

- The first floor of the house is accessible by platform lift. The route takes you through the modern kitchen and into the back office. The doors from the kitchen and from the back office to the entrance hall are 86cm wide.

- Due to fire safety requirements, we can have no more than one wheelchair user in the house at a time, unless a second wheelchair user has enough mobility to use stairs in the event of an emergency.

- The usual visitor route is through the entrance to reception, then turning right and going up two steps into the front courtyard. Entry to the house is by six wide steps up to the front door. There are no handrails.

- The front door opens manually, and a volunteer should be on hand to open it if required. The door is 93cm wide.

- Most of the rooms in the house have wood floors, as they would have done in Georgian times. There are stone slabs on the floor of the Georgian kitchen.

- There is natural light in the house and, on dark days, electric candles are lit. The light levels are low for conservation reasons and to replicate how it was in Georgian times.

- It is possible to turn a wheelchair in most of the rooms on the first floor, although the common parlour is a smaller room.

- Access to the second floor is by nine stairs to the landing, and another nine to the second floor. There is a handrail on the left going up.

- Mrs Wordsworth’s closet is a small room and has a narrow route through it, with a sharp turning from Mrs Wordsworth’s bedroom.
• Seating is available around the house. Visitors can sit on all the seats in the rear rooms, which are hands-on rooms. They can sit on the window seats in the front rooms, which are hands-off. The majority of seats do not have arm rests.

• A volunteer should be available on each floor to welcome visitors and provide information.

• On Mondays and Thursdays in term-time, there are 30-minute volunteer-led house tours. Costumed servants (staff) work in the Georgian kitchen and the rest of the house on Wednesdays and Saturdays in term time and from Saturday to Thursday in school holidays. They give ten-minute talks, in the dining room, on Wednesdays and Saturdays and on most days in school holidays, although these may be replaced with children’s storytelling sessions. Information about these and other activities can be found on our website at https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wordsworth-house.

• Visitors are welcome to spend quiet time in any room of the house. The Georgian kitchen is a pleasant place to rest.

Catering

• There is no café on site. Free tea and coffee are served in the upstairs discovery room.

• The upstairs discovery room is reached by a flight of 15 steep stairs. There is a platform lift from the wash house to access this room. Due to fire safety requirements, the upstairs discovery room can accommodate only one wheelchair at a time.

• The room is very light. It has natural light and uplighters on the walls.

• The counter height is 94cm. The volunteers are very happy to come round and assist as required and to provide table service if people have problems standing or waiting.
- The room has 18 seats and a carpeted floor. Tables are 76cm high with 64cm clearance.
- Circulation space between the tables is less than 1200mm, as the room is small.
- A portable induction loop is available on request.
- Straws and double-handed mugs are available.
- As a charity, we welcome donations for tea and coffee.

**Garden**

- The rear garden has flat, gravel paths. There are two entrances to it from the back courtyard. The opening on the left has a step, but the opening on the right does not.
- There are six steps from the main garden to the terrace, with handrails on the left and the right. There are six steps to the terrace from the small walled garden with handrails on the left and the right. The terrace has a gravel path.
- There is a low entrance from the main garden to the small walled garden. It is 173cm high and 76cm wide.
- There is a wind-up audio unit in the summer house on the terrace featuring flood stories and Wordsworth's poems. There are benches to sit on.
- There are two benches at the rear of the main garden. There are a further two benches in the small walled garden.
- The front courtyard has a flatter stone route for wheelchair access.
Contact details for more information

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Last revision: March 2019