

Wordsworth House and Garden access guide 2020

Wordsworth House and Garden, Main Street, Cockermouth CA13 9RX

Telephone: 01900 824805

Email: wordsworthhouse@nationaltrust.org.uk

The basics

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 rooms. There is no café. The house is on Main Street in Cockermouth, a small market town with many shops and places to eat. The main house consists of two floors: the first floor, which has a ground level cellar beneath it, and the second floor. A smaller, adjoining building houses the visitor reception and shop plus the discovery rooms. All the house's visitor facilities are close to each other.

- There is an induction loop at the reception desk.
- There are two manual wheelchairs for visitors to borrow, one with pneumatic tyres for ease of use on the garden's gravel paths. They do not need to be booked. Motorised chairs are not allowed in the house due to the weight and the safety risk with historic floors and tight spaces.
- There is wheelchair access to the garden and, via a platform lift, to the house first floor and upstairs discovery room, where we serve free tea and coffee. There is no wheelchair access to the second floor or cellar.
- For safety in the event of a fire, we can have only one wheelchair in the house or upstairs discovery room. This is because we are allowed only

one lift journey in a fire evacuation. We can accommodate a second wheelchair user only if they have enough mobility to use stairs in an emergency. We operate a lanyard system to maintain these safe levels.

- Mobile reception is good. Visitors may call 01900 824805 if they have a problem, but a member of the team will usually be nearby to assist.
- Assistance dogs are welcome. All other dogs may wait with owners in the front courtyard, where there are chairs, a tin of dog biscuits and a water bowl. The bowl is filled regularly and can be refilled on request.
- Light levels in the house are low on dark days and especially in February/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.
- Pushchairs can go in the garden, but should be left at reception when visiting the house. We can lend a hip seat.

Arrival and parking

- There are brown signs in the town 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 elsewhere in town; time disks are available from visitor reception and local shops.
- There are three disk parking spaces to the side of the property on Low Sand Lane. (This is where satnavs will direct you.) However, this is a short one-way street with very limited space for turning a vehicle.

- Wakefield Road (CA13 0HR) is the nearest car park and has designated disabled parking spaces. This is on the opposite side of the river. It is a flat, step-free 300-metre walk via a footbridge to Wordsworth House.
- 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 and 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, as well as parking on single and double yellow lines in most streets for up to three hours.
- There is no easy drop-off point at the property as there is a mini-roundabout outside. We recommend either dropping off a little further east along Main Street, from where there are level pavements leading to the property, or parking at Wakefield Road as above.
- There are six designated disabled parking spaces in the Fairfield (Sainsbury's) car park. The walk to Wordsworth House is slightly downhill with two road crossings. (Main Street has a zebra crossing.)

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-site.

Visitor reception and shop

- Access is through the front door, which is 93cm wide and has a button for assisted opening. The floor is tiled. The visitor route then goes out through an electric door, which is 121cm wide and opens automatically, into a cobbled courtyard. The courtyard 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.
- There are two manual wheelchairs for visitors to borrow, one with pneumatic tyres for ease of use on the garden's gravel paths. They do not need to be booked. Motorised chairs are not allowed in the house due to the weight and the safety risk with historic floors and tight spaces.
- A variety of things are available from the visitor welcome team to enhance visits and these are free for people with access needs. These include audio tours, braille and large print introductions to the property, exhibition catalogues and loanable guidebooks and floor plans. Visitors can also buy guidebooks and floorplans to keep. A portable induction loop is available on request.

Downstairs discovery room (next to visitor reception and shop)

- 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 is propped open except in bad weather. If it is closed, a member of the team will be on hand to open it. The downstairs discovery room can also be accessed through the rear of the visitor reception and shop, through an entrance measuring 88cm.
- The floor is uneven. A short slope leads into the wash house. There is a platform lift there to access the first floor of the house and the upstairs discovery room. A member of the team will be happy to assist if needed.
- There are chairs, with and without arm rests, in this room.
- A folder with information about and images of the second floor of the house and the exhibition is available. 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. The floor is uneven. There is a manual door, which is 95cm wide. This is open in nice weather. If 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 goes through a modern kitchen and via the clerk's office to the entrance hall of the historic house. The doors from the kitchen and from the 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, 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 on Main Street into visitor reception, then turning left across the front courtyard and up two steps into the front garden. Entry to the house is by six wide steps up to the front door on the first floor of the house. 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 wooden floors, as they would have done in Georgian times. There are stone slabs in 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 a small landing where the staircase turns, and then another nine stairs 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. This room can also be accessed from the landing – the door is usually closed but a volunteer should be on hand to assist.
- Seating is available around the house. Visitors can sit on all the seats in the rear rooms (overlooking the back garden), 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 both floors to provide information.
- On Monday and Thursday 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 Wednesday and Saturday in term time and from Saturday to Thursday in school holidays. They give ten-minute talks, in the dining room, on Wednesday and Saturday 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 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/wordsworth-house.
- The dining room, children's room, exhibition and cellar contain audio presentations. There are no audio presentations in the common parlour, and it is one of the quieter rooms for those seeking a quiet place. You can sit on the window seats. Alternatively, the garden can be very peaceful, and staff and volunteers are on hand to help with suggestions responding to specific circumstances on the day of your visit.

Catering

- There is no café on site. Free tea and coffee are served in the upstairs discovery room on a help-yourself basis. There is often a volunteer available to assist, but sometimes the area is not staffed. In this case, other staff are happy to assist if at all possible.
- The upstairs discovery room is reached by a flight of 15 stairs (similar to a standard flight of household stairs) with handrail. There is also access by a platform lift from the wash house. Due to fire safety requirements, the upstairs discovery room can accommodate only one wheelchair.

- 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 from behind the counter to assist and to provide table service if people have problems standing or waiting.
- This small room has 18 seats and is carpeted. The tables are 76cm high with 64cm clearance and circulation space of less than 1200mm.
- A portable induction loop is available on request.
- Straws and double-handled 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 small step, the opening on the right has a slope.
- There are six steps from the main garden to the terrace, with handrails left and right. There are six steps to the terrace from the small walled garden with handrails left and 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 with 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.

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