

**DESIGN AND ACCESS REPORT
MARBLE HILL HOUSE
REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS**

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Table of Contents

1.0 DESIGN

2

2.0 ACCESS

7

MARBLE HILL HOUSE REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

1.0 Design

DAS accompanying applications for Listed Building Consent should include a brief explanation of how the design has taken account of:

- *The historic and special architectural importance of the building.*
- *The particular physical features of the building that justifies its designation as a Listed Building.*
- *The building's setting.*

The statement should:

- *Explain and justify the approach to ensuring that the Listed Building preserves or enhances its special architectural importance.*
- *Where an aspect of design may impact on this, the statement should explain why this is necessary and what measures have been taken to minimise the impact.*



Figure 1. Long view of the House from the south; this facade looks out towards the Thames.

Marble Hill House is a Grade I Listed, fine exemplar of the development of Polite domestic architecture in the 1st half of the 18th century, in the application of Palladian design principles, and its design and construction are associated with figures of importance including Colen Campbell, the 'Architect Earl', Henry Herbert (Earl of Pembroke), and Roger Morris. The surrounding Marble Hill Park is an important historic landscape and is Listed Grade II* on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Historic Interest. Initially designed by Charles Bridgeman with advice from Alexander Pope, Marble Hill forms part of the wider Richmond Hill Views landscape, which is protected by an act of Parliament. Pope and Bridgeman's landscape was inspired by the Arcadian villas of ancient Rome and featured formal lawns, a pleasure garden and a 9 pin alley.



Figure 2. Wallpaper on the 2nd floor.

Both externally and internally, the house has many fine features that are important to the story of the development of Georgian Architecture. Many rooms retain the original decoration, features and sense of grandeur; most notably the fine Great Hall. Many of the spaces have been carefully restored based upon historical records and represent the period that they were built in.

Because of the buildings listed status and architectural importance, the alternations to the exterior of the building are restricted to conservative repairs to fabric. These will be executed like-for-like repairs with appropriate materials and skills being employed.

The following works are included within the scope:

- Repairs to the roof coverings, including the replacement of broken slates and tiles and re-gilding the weather vane
- Repairing the roof gutters. This may require the replacement or repair of the lead gutter linings in several locations. All new linings will be like-for-like in new code 8 lead.
- Repairing the dormer windows, several of these are in a critical state of decay.
- Repairing sash windows and shutters using joinery repairs and replacing missing ironmongery with new to match existing. Note: a number of windows date from the 1960's.
- Replacing the 1960's rotten timber rooflight with a new low profile rooflight.
- Redecoration and refurbishment of the rainwater pipes.
- Renewal and improvement to the external below ground drainage.
- Repainting of the external render.
- Reordering of the internal modern spaces, including WC's.
- Repair, including re-plastering and repainting of deteriorated low level plaster.

- Removing asbestos where strictly necessary for the execution of repairs.
- Introducing sensitive passive fire protection solutions to doors.
- Introducing passive fire protection partitions to the garret and elsewhere.
- Replacement of the existing failing electrical installation; this will require the lifting of a number of historic floorboards; these will be sensitively lifted and re-laid by specialist conservation carpenters.
- Reinforcing the main staircase structure.
- Installing a new platform lift.



Figure 3. Wallpaper on the 2nd floor.

Where inappropriate materials have been used historically, e.g. cement mortar; repairs will be executed in appropriate conservation materials, e.g. lime mortar. The works will include the re-gilding of the weathervane and other cosmetic items of work, which will positively contribute to the buildings appearance.

At Feasibility Stage, the options for the proposed lift include installing it externally. This was discounted on historic building terms through discussion with English Heritage’s Curatorial Team and taking into account the importance of the landscape.

Pre-application advice for the changes to the historic fabric was sought from Historic England, to quote:

“... the proposals are for a lift between the ground and first floors contained within a much altered former closet room (currently used as the Control Room), and for associated minor repairs and alterations.”

“... we have no objections to the proposals for a lift and minor alterations within the house itself, as these have no impact on areas of high significance.”

“We strongly support the principle of the proposals, and look forward to further details as the scheme progresses.”

The only external addition will be the replacement of a rotten 1960's timber rooflight with a new low profile rooflight. This will be less intrusive than the existing rooflight.



Figure 4. View of the Great Room F11; note the fine ornamentation and paintings.

Internally there is some intervention to the fabric with a 1960's door opening being widened and the shop space being refitted to accommodate retail units and new interpretation facilities. The fire proofing works to the doors will be undoing the poor asbestos proofing works of the 1960's and carrying out more sensitive works; this strategy and methodology was drawn up through consultation with Historic England's National Fire Advisor and the English Heritage Curator; the approach is detailed in drawing 310 and the door type drawings.

Two doorways are to be fitted with fire partitions. One of these, (ground floor), is a modern opening, the new partition will be concealed from view by existing doors. To the 1st floor the doorway partition will fit within the existing doorframe creating minimal intervention with the fabric, this work is detailed in drawing 301.

The highest impact work internally, after the installation of the lift, is the complete replacement of the existing electrical installation. This is necessary because the existing system is failing; in some areas, the electricians have been disconnected for safety reasons. The lack of an operational electrical installation would severely limit the future use and

survival of the building; therefore, we are proposing to renew it. This will unfortunately require us to lift a substantial number of historic floorboards and require the opening up of chases. We are concerned to ensure that this limits the impact and have worked closely with English Heritage conservators to draw up a strategy that will limit impact; key to this is the reinstallation of the electrics along the existing routes, this will mean that all boards we lift will have already been lifted in the late 20thC. To reduce the opening up of electrical chases, the number of electrical sockets have been reduced to a minimum, and the switching for the lights has been centralised, avoiding the need to open up existing chases that are in sensitive rooms or are behind sensitive surface finishes (these are mostly thought to be late 20thC).



Figure 5. The main staircase; note the plaster swags and the mahogany stair balustrade.

The main staircase is one of the finest features of the house and is identified separately within the Listing Description. This has been found to be suffering from sagging at the junction with the wall. English Heritage have consulted with Historic England Structural Engineers and reputable conservators and have developed a strategy for reinforcement that is both effective and sympathetic to the historic fabric.

2.0 Access

- *The access component of the statement is broadly the same as for planning applications, but with reference to the special considerations for Listed Buildings.*
- *The statement should explain how the approach to access balances the duties imposed by the Disability Discrimination Act, (where applicable), with the historical and architectural significance of the building.*
- *The statement should detail any specific issues that arise because the building is Listed, the range of options considered and, where inclusive design cannot be provided, an explanation as to why should be given.*
- *Where the structure of the Listed Building restricts ability to carry out alterations to meet minimum levels of accessibility, the statement should give details of solutions that will be put in place to minimise the impact on disabled people and ensure that any services provided within the building are made available in other ways.*

We have an Access Consultant appointed to the Project Team, they have advised us regarding the most appropriate solutions. An intrinsic part of the proposals for the main house are to make the building more accessible to the public and to represent the interior.



Figure 6. Tetrastyle Hall G04, note the columns and original flooring, looking north.

One of the main access improvements is the installation of a platform lift within the building to provide access to the 1st (principal) floor. Due to the sensitive nature of the property it was not seen as possible to extend access to the 2nd or 3rd floors; the area where the lift is to be installed is an ancillary space that has been altered in the early 20thC and so has less historic fabric with some elements that need to be altered only

dating to 1905. The design and detailing of the lift is such as to limit as far as is possible the intervention, and to make the proposals as reversible as feasible in historic building terms. The decision to proceed with the type and size of lift was informed by a thorough options appraisal and is the result of the careful balancing of access, historic fabric and fire evacuation strategy. This location is the least historically sensitive area within the interior of the house. The lift is proposed to be offset from the wall to avoid impacting upon the existing skirting boards, cornices, panelling and architraves. As such it is only the floor to the ground and 1st floor and the ground floor ceiling that will need to be partially removed. In the cases of the two floors, both partially date from the 20thC. It will be clad in plasterboard, and then be painted to match the décor of the space.



Figure 7. Fireplace within the Tetrastyle Hall G04.

To provide access into the property, the main door on the north elevation is to be managed by staff as an entrance for non-step users. Other visitors will enter via the existing entrance. The separation of access for step and non-step users is unfortunate, but is unavoidable due to the constraints of the existing building; these prevent the installation of a ramp within the existing shop area.

Vertical stepped access within the property will continue to be provided by two existing staircases, the service stair running from ground to garret floor, and the main stair linking ground to 1st floor.

The existing toilets are to be redecorated and fitted with baby changing units, there is already a wheelchair accessible WC that will be retained.

Within the property English Heritage propose to create an engaging and accessible interpretative story, this will be aimed at a broad section of society with the objective of engaging all visitors.