



7.0 MARBLE HILL HOUSE & SPORTS BUILDING

7.1 MAIN HOUSE - DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

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.

Marble Hill House is a Grade I listed, fine exemplar of the development of polite domestic architecture in the first half of the 18th century, in the application of Palladian design principles. 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 designated 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 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 nine pin alley.

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, replacing tiles and repairing leadwork
- Repairing sash windows
- Redecoration of the rainwater pipes
- Repainting of the external render
- Replacement of lower sections of the render with new lime mortar render.
- Reordering of the internal modern spaces, including WCs
- Repair, including replastering and repainting of deteriorated low level plaster.
- Removing asbestos
- Introducing sensitive passive fire protection solutions to doors
- Repairing electrical circuits
- Installing a new platform lift.

Where inappropriate materials have been used, e.g. cement mortar, repairs will be executed in appropriate conservation materials, e.g. lime mortar. The works will include the regilding of the weathervane which will positively contribute to the buildings appearance.

At feasibility stage the options for the proposed lift included 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 seek to be less intrusive than the existing rooflight.

Internally there is some intervention to the fabric with a 1960's door opening being widened and the shop space being



Long view of the House from the north across the Great Lawn



Wallpaper on the second floor.



Wallpaper on the second floor.

refitted. 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.

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 first floor the doorway partition will fit within the existing doorframe creating minimal intervention with the fabric, this work is detailed in drawing 301. All Marble Hill House drawings can be found at Appendix 8.3

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 which 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 about the most appropriate solutions; the access report can be found at Appendix 8.8. 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.

One of the main access improvements is the installation of a platform lift within the building to provide access to the first (principle) floor. Due to the sensitive nature of the property it was not seen as possible to extend access to the second or third floor; the area where the lift is to be installed is an ancillary

space that has been altered in the early 20th century 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 buildings terms. The decision to proceed with the type and size of lift was informed by a thorough options appraisal (see Appendix 8.31) 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 skirtingboards, cornices, paneling and architraves. As such it is only the floor to the ground and first floor and the ground floor ceiling that will need to be partially removed. In the cases of the floors both partially date from the 20th century. It will be clad in plasterboard and fitted skirting & cornice level boards, this will then be painted to match the décor of the space.

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 is to be provided by two staircases, the service stair running from ground to garret floor and the main stair linking ground to first floor. These staircases are existing historic staircases and will not be altered by these works

The existing toilets are to be redecorated and fitted with baby changing units, the existing wheelchair accessible WC will be retained.

Within the property English Heritage propose to create an engaging and accessible interpretative story, the objective is to engage all visitors. (For the full Interpretation Scheme Design refer to Appendix 8.5)



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



Fireplace within the Tetrastyle Hall G04.



Tetrastyle Hall G04, note the fine columns, looking North.

8.0 SPORTS BUILDING



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The sports building dates from the 1970s and is a low rise single story building constructed from brick and concrete. It is located away from the main house at the edge of the park. It is used as sports changing facility and headquarters for the site staff. It is not itself listed, but sits within the grounds of the main house; and has many interesting architectural features.

The works proposed include the following:

- New walls and partitions to separate out the changing areas
- New WC cubicles
- New sanitary fittings and plumbing
- Repairs to the flooring
- Forming of new openings and spaces.

All the alternations except the ramps are internal.

All new walls will be built to match the existing late 20th century detailing; this is heavy concrete blockwork walls with thick, robust render and paint; the floor is asphalt. This will be repaired as required. The existing orange and hardwood decorative boxing will be retained & reused.

New doors will match the robust style of the existing doors.

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We have an access consultant appointed to the project team, they have advised us about the most appropriate solutions; refer to the access report found in Appendix 8.8. The proposals for the sports building are to make the building usable to female and male users concurrently and to accommodate the basic needs of ambulant disabled and wheelchair users.

The works are focused upon splitting of the spaces into male only, unisex and female only areas and upgrading the fittings and decorations. An ambulant disabled WC and wheelchair accessible shower is proposed to cater for the casual use of the building by wheelchair and ambulant disabled visitors. All these interventions retain the overall character of the space, using the same architectural language.

To the entrance and fire escape, the existing steps have been designed out by releveling the adjacent ground to a shallow slope. This avoids the need for a formal 'ramp' with the associated handrails; these are often visually and physically obtrusive and have the capacity to segregate users of the same entrance. The releveled ground will be unobtrusive.



View of the front of the Sports Building. Note the robust brick and concrete detailing.



Typical view of the sinks and their ornate boxing.



The showers, note the heavy concrete walls.