

13. BENEFITS

HERITAGE BENEFITS

Repair and restoration of one of the most significant and influential sites in the United Kingdom.

PUBLIC BENEFITS

Both the house and garden at Strawberry Hill will be open to the public as a historic house, on a regular basis between Easter and September and by arrangement at other times. It will be presented through guided tours that bring out its significance in the history of architecture, interior decoration and collecting, as well as literature and gardening. The villa will also be open for booked educational visits and activities throughout the year. The introduction of a lift will secure disabled access to the ground floor and 90% of the main rooms on the first floor. Inaccessible rooms will be presented online and through television monitors.

The tours and opening arrangements will build on the considerable experience gained by the guides already working in the house. Tours will be provided at several levels, from the general to the more specialised. Other forms of interpretation will be developed to reconnect Walpole's dispersed collections with the interiors that once housed them, including a museum room in which Walpole objects on loan will be displayed. A shop and modest refreshment facilities will also be provided.

The local community is very strongly involved in the project. Walpole's house has given its name to a distinct area of the borough of Twickenham. The Strawberry Hill Trust grew out of the Association of Friends of Strawberry Hill, founded to publicise Walpole's villa and raise funds for its preservation. The Friends, many of whom are also house guides, run an active fund-raising programme, with events at the house and elsewhere. Most of the 200 members are from the local community. The Friends and the Trust have officers in common, a number of whom are also leading figures in other local amenity groups, as well as having strong links with local government. The house guides will continue to be very largely recruited from the local community and local volunteers will be essential for a number of the house functions.

EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

The lease for Walpole's villa will be held by the Strawberry Hill Trust and in its new, post-project existence will fulfil multiple heritage and educational roles. At this point in the planning of the project, it is planned that the house will be opened regularly to public following a pattern of opening times set within conservation-based guidelines established by the National Trust and English Heritage. In addition, a major educational programme is being developed for the house on Walpole related themes that will complement the primary school education programmes at Orleans House and Ham House. Themes for the programme being considered are art & design, history and printing techniques. As well, a programme is being developed for

age groups up to age 18 that will include the history of printing, caricature & satire in print culture, printing & engraving technique, social history and the history of observation. A formal discussion with Yale University will be held in the next two months, hosted by the Paul Mellon Centre for British Art, that will explore how permanent links between Yale and Strawberry Hill can be established to further the educational goals of the Strawberry Hill Trust. In order to maximise the educational potential of Strawberry Hill, both St Mary's College and the Strawberry Hill Trust will use the fine rooms of the Waldegrave Wing. It is envisaged that the fine rooms will be used for lectures by the Strawberry Hill Trust and its educational partners such as Yale University.

The restoration plans for Walpole's villa include a strong emphasis on education and training. Already students from the BSc course in Conservation at London Metropolitan University are working at Strawberry Hill, helping with the research which will inform the conservation programme. They will continue to work with the architect and conservators throughout the project. Students from the University of Pennsylvania will take part in a garden project in Summers 2005 /2007 and local students will be involved as the restoration progresses.

Once the house is re-opened in 2010 there will be a full education programme in place for schools, for students and for life-long learning. An education officer will be appointed and two rooms will be fully equipped for practical educational activities. Horace Walpole's villa and writings lend themselves to interpretation in a number of ways and will be a rich resource for local schools and communities. A full report has been prepared and is summarised as follows:

Living history: using the house as a backdrop for drama and music – actors as the Walpole household.

Practical activities: based on the techniques Walpole used at the house, papier mache, stained glass, printing, wallpaper design.

Gothic Horror: the first gothic horror novel, *The Castle of Otranto* was written by Walpole at Strawberry Hill. This has inspired many generations of writers leading to Philip Pullman and J.K. Rowling in our own time. 'Gothic horror' can be used as a starting point for story-telling, creative writing, film-making.

Garden Design: Horace Walpole introduced the English Garden at Strawberry Hill, a freely romantic style in comparison with the formality of French or Italian gardens at the time. Garden lovers will enjoy courses and practical sessions at Strawberry Hill

The Education Rooms

These two rooms are situated at the base of the Round Tower and they will be fully restored and equipped with work surfaces, storage areas and sinks. There will be space for a class of 35 primary children, 20 older children or 15 adults. The rooms will be fully accessible in accordance with DDA. Adjacent space is available for toilets and storage.

Other rooms in the house such as Walpole's Library will be available for adult groups for talks or seminars.

Guides and Video

A video will be made of the conservation process and an edited version will be available to visitors. Trained guides and education specialists will conduct special tours and activities in the house and garden and an audio guide will be introduced for the general visitor.

Physical Access

Access for visitors and staff with disabilities will be provided wherever possible.

A group of rooms that have been converted to bathrooms provides a convenient locations for lifts between the ground and first floors of both Walpole's villa and Waldegrave Wing. Where immediate access is not feasible, alternative provision will be made by the use of television monitors (eg to show the Library and Walpole's bedroom which are isolated and difficult to reach by the stairs) or by flexibility in planning (eg alternative locations for staff offices within Walpole's villa).

Signage will be sensitive to the needs of the visually impaired.

Cloakrooms will be designed for people with disabilities.

14. GREEN TRAVEL PLAN

It is the policy of Strawberry Hill Trust to encourage environment-friendly access to Strawberry Hill. Walpole's villa can be an hour and a half's drive from central London, but by train it is only just over half an hour from Waterloo whether a fast train to Richmond is combined with a bus or taxi ride, or the slow train to Strawberry Hill Railway Station is followed by a short walk.. Strawberry Hill Railway Station was constructed to provide access in the 19th century by Lady Waldegrave's guests and is only 5 minutes walk of the site. It is, therefore, part and parcel of the experience of visiting Walpole's villa and interpretation would be provided to explain this not only at the house and station, but in national advertising.

Access on Foot

Not only is Walpole's villa readily accessible from Richmond through footpaths and the Twickenham riverside gardens, its relationship to surrounding buildings can be best understood on foot. Walpole's Strawberry Hill had views to the Thames and was one of a series of 18th century villas that related closely to the river. By presenting the site as part of the Thames Riverside, visitors will be encouraged to walk between these properties and understand them as an entity, visiting Orleans House, Marble Hill and Ham, accessed by ferry. On occasion, other properties such as Pope's Grotto are also open and would form part of this circuit which would tie in with the Thames Arcadia and the Thames Landscape Strategy. Strawberry Hill will not be seen in isolation, but within a much wider heritage context. A map showing Horace Walpole's Twickenham in the 18th century available in the shop will support this activity.

Access by Boat

The Thames Landscape Strategy is proposing the construction of landings along the river to allow access to the area by boat. One of these is planned for Radnor Gardens, providing almost immediate access to Strawberry Hill.

Access by Bus

Local accessibility is available by bus. There is a good bus services passing the gate to Strawberry Hill House with stops outside both Strawberry Hill and St Mary's University College. Bus service 33 also serves a number of other heritage sites, thus facilitating combined visits to Strawberry Hill with the Richmond and Twickenham Museums, Marble Hill House, the London Wetland Centre and Orleans House Gallery. The R 68 bus service, which runs between Kew and Hampton Court (via Richmond and Twickenham) stops on Strawberry Vale at the junction with Waldegrave Road, less than 5 minutes from the House.

An interchange in Twickenham connects with several other local routes

Access by Railway

As stated, Strawberry Hill Railway Station is only a short walk from Walpole's villa. Trains run every half an hour from London Waterloo on weekdays, once an hour on Sundays. The area served by this is considerable as the trains run in two directions

around a circular route through both Richmond and Wimbledon..

Twickenham Railway Station is 25 minutes walk from Strawberry Hill, but also connected by bus, changing to catch bus service 33 or R68 in Twickenham King Street. Alternatively, connection to the London Waterloo to Strawberry Hill railway service is possible. There is a call point for taxis at the station, but no taxi rank.

Richmond Railway Station is more distant, but has good access to bus services with service 33 running direct to Strawberry Hill House, and taxis are also usually available. Alternatively, transfer to trains to Strawberry Hill Railway Station is easy. The station is served by fast trains from London Waterloo and other services connect from Reading and Windsor in the west. It is also served by the North London Line..

Access by Underground

Access to Strawberry Hill is also possible by London Underground with the District Line running to Richmond Railway Station, from where Strawberry Hill is readily accessible. (See above)

Access by Bicycle

It is known that many local residents regularly use bicycles as a means of transport for both pleasure and access. Designated longer distance cycle routes pass nearby. Cycle stands will be provided within the car park serving visitors to Walpole's villa and maps showing safe cycle connections to other comparable will be available.

16. CAR PARKS

Forecourt

The Forecourt is an essential presentation space for the heritage site.. It is essentially a creation of Lady Waldegrave and its restoration would recover the tranquil setting she provided for the north front when she relocated the road away from the house. To realise this, cars are removed from the horseshoe drive and gates are reinstated at each entrance. The reinstatement of iron railings between the two gates defines the area as a precious space. The tarmac is replaced with gravel and the area becomes restricted to pedestrians and emergency services. In addition a double garage is demolished to make way for screen planting and a further parking space beyond the curved screen wall is removed to allow the restoration of Walpole's Prior's Garden beside the house.

The upgrading will not only mean that the forecourt becomes an essential part of the heritage site, but that it will also contribute significantly to the environment of Waldegrave Road.

Visitors' Car Park

The new Visitor's Car Park concealed in trees in a culturally insignificant area outside Walpole's garden boundary, essentially replaces the parking in the forecourt in a more acceptable way in terms of the Registered Landscape. A new vehicular access is formed onto Waldegrave Road.

Whilst every effort will be made to encourage access to Strawberry Hill by alternative, more acceptable means of transport, the Strawberry Hill Trust recognises the need to provide a dedicated car park to accommodate vehicles belonging to those visitors that do come by mini-bus or car. The Strawberry Hill Local Area Consultation Study carried out three years ago found that 55% of residents had difficulty in parking in their road because of the level of car ownership amongst residents in the area.

Off-street parking is provided, therefore, to ensure that the benefits of opening Walpole's villa to the public does not disadvantage local residents by increasing parking in the adjoining streets. Two spaces within the car park will be dedicated for use by visitors with disabilities and a further two reserved for the occupants of the holiday flat, the income from which makes the Trust's project sustainable. Another bay is reserved for a mini-bus that serves small groups and schools.

Although the removal of 17 trees is required (see Tree Survey and drawing), every effort has been made to retain as many of the best trees as possible

and substantial amounts of planting are retained and supplemented to conceal the cars.

The car park has the advantage of being independent of the college. Because of the extended opening hours, use of the college car parks is not feasible. Equally the Trust's car park will not be available for college use.

Waldegrave Car Park

The Waldegrave Car Park is used by the College staff, but the present layout is inefficient and intrudes on historic areas that are important to the understanding of Walpole's villa. The removal of a group of acacias allows the layout to be rationalised, whilst maintaining a capacity approaching that which exists. Other trees that are decayed are removed, replaced or subject to tree surgery.

Alterations to the existing vehicular access on Waldegrave Road allows the entrance to be used by vehicles leaving as well as entering the site. This removes the need for cars to exit across Lady Waldegrave's forecourt and is an inherent part of the rescue of the setting of Walpole's villa.

15. ABORICULTURAL REPORT

A Tree Survey has been carried out on the whole of the heritage site and is submitted with the application,

Author: PI, SG KR + Strawberry Hill Trust (MS,GH,TS,RH)
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