

HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

WORKS AT MARBLE HILL HOUSE, LONDON TW1 2NL

Lift Installation, Conservation Repairs, Re-presentation and New Interpretation



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revised August 2018

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This Appraisal has been produced to support Listed Building Consent and Full Planning applications for alterations to the Stable Block at Marble Hill, London, Twickenham TW1 2NL. It has been produced in accordance with NPPF, Section 16: *Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*, paragraphs 189, 192, 193 and 194 to demonstrate the understanding of the place and assess the impact of the proposal on its significance as a heritage asset.

1.2 Marble Hill House and Marble Hill Park are owned freehold by English Heritage Trust. The Charity is in the process of developing a major project to transform and deliver a sustainable future for the site, representing the house and its landscape setting in a way which is commensurate with its historical significance, architectural importance and to enhance the understanding of the extraordinary life of its original owner Henrietta Howard, onetime mistress to George II, socialite and intellectual.

1.3 The project includes repairs, restoration, access improvements and new interpretation of the House and landscape as well as repairs and upgrades inside the Stable Block and extension to its rear to house a new café. This Appraisal focuses on the works planned at the House.

1.4 These works are a mixture of conservation repairs and minor alterations and include installation of a platform lift to the first floor, repairs to joinery and roof, remedial works addressing damp issues, upgrading fire protection on several doors and introduction of fire compartmentation in the attic, installation of a new carpet with an underlay to protect the main staircase and works enabling new interpretation and representation.

1.5 To complete some of these works the Trust is seeking Parks for People grant from Heritage Lottery Fund for the landscape restoration works and had been successful in their Phase 1 development costs application.

2. THE SITE

2.1 Site Location

2.1.1 The site consists of the Marble Hill House, an 18th-century villa which is the centrepiece of a large historic park.

2.1.2 Marble Hill is situated on the north bank of the River Thames (National Grid Reference: NGR TQ 17353 73651), c. 1km upstream from Richmond Bridge and on the opposite bank to Ham House. Richmond town is c. 2km to the north-east, and Twickenham c. 1km to the south-west. The park is separated by iron railings from Warren Path, an asphalted footpath which runs alongside the river to Richmond. Richmond Road and the backs of houses in Cambridge Park provide the boundary to the north and east, Montpelier Road and Orleans Road the boundary to the west.

2.2 Designations

2.2.1 The Site comprises a grade I listed House standing in its once landscaped gardens – Marble Hill Park - entered on the Register of Parks and Gardens at grade II*.

2.2.2 Within the 500m study area, the assessment has identified one Grade I, 11 Grade II* and 23 Grade II listed buildings. A grade II Ice House and Stable Block are to the east of the house. Grade II listed White Lodge stands at the north-west entry to Marble Hill Park. Along Montpelier Row there are a total of five Grade II* and five Grade II Listed Buildings.

2.2.3 The site lies within Conservation Area 8: Twickenham Riverside, and within an Archaeological Priority Area, both designated by Richmond upon Thames Borough Council.

2.2.4 Three other Conservation Areas, as designated by Richmond upon Thames Borough Council, lie within the 500m study area, comprising 21: Cambridge Park; 48: Amyand Park Road; and 49: Crown Road.

2.2.5 The proposed development site does not lie within or within 500m of any nationally designated Scheduled Monuments, Registered Battlefields or World Heritage Sites.

2.2.6 A total of 77 non-designated heritage assets, registered on the Greater London Historic Environment Record, fall within the 500m study area. None of these fall within or are adjacent to the site's boundary.

2.3 Marble Hill House: Description and History

2.3.1 Please note that this appraisal offers only an outline of the history and significance of the site and refer to the full assessment in the recently completed Conservation Management Plan (2016 – copy available on request).

2.3.2 Description

Marble Hill House is a Neo-Palladian villa built in the 1720s for Henrietta Howard (1689 – 26 July 1767), Countess of Suffolk, for whom the estate was also purchased at the same time. The house is rectangular in plan, with the main elevations facing north and south. It is stucco faced with stone dressings. It has three main storeys with the lowest treated as an architectural basement. The lead-covered blocking course pyramidal roof has a modillion cornice and is covered with blue-black pantiles and with a lead-covered ball finial at the apex. The north and south fronts are of five-bays with the centre three bays projecting and crowned by pediments.

The principal floor is marked by the projecting plain string course and a sill band. On the north front, the projecting centre is enriched with a rusticated basement and a pilastered giant Ionic order, tetra-style and with stepped architrave and pulvinated frieze. There is a cartouche in the tympanum of the pediment. Low and curved wing walls flanked the north front and that on the west has once screened the service wing demolished in the early 20th century. The south front is more plainly treated with a rusticated arched door at the centre. The house boasts fine interiors including the Great Room (a cube of 24 ft) and a fine mahogany staircase (Fig. 1).

The staircase rises around the well giving access to the *piano mobile* or the first floor. It is made of mahogany with a fine patina and very finely carved balustrade. It is an essential and visually dominant element in the entrance hall, and an essential part of the sequence of 'public' rooms within the house. Its creation was made possible by a gift of mahogany to Henrietta Howard from her royal beau, the future King George II. It was probably carved by James Richards, Master Sculptor and Carver in Wood to the King (successor in that post to Grinling Gibbons) and his assistant Ralph Kite. There are records of payments to Richards for work at Marble Hill and he and Kite produced a similar staircase at Houghton Hall in Norfolk for Sir Robert Walpole in 1729-1730. Both are the earliest examples of the use of structural mahogany.



Fig. 1. The mahogany staircase.

The interiors match the exterior in their sophistication while creating a remarkable contrast through the opulence and splendour of decorative detail and use of colour in joinery and wall fabrics. The rooms provide a fitting backdrop for the display of items of collections.

The Breakfast Parlour (Fig. 2) was probably originally built as a Dining Parlour – it was formerly adjacent to the Service Wing. This room changed its function when that role was assumed by the new Dining Parlour on the opposite side of the building after that portion of the ground floor was remodelled in 1750. It is dual aspect, looking south towards the river and east towards the site of the service wing. At the north end is a large, tripartite alcove with two doors flanking a central buffet niche. All but one opening is arched and the soffits of the arches and the central flying cornice are moulded in plaster with Greek frets or rosettes in recessed square panels. The central opening to the main room also has pairs of consoles in the upper corners, set at right angles to each other.

The room is plastered and painted. Wallpaper in the alcove is a replica of the 19th-century wallpaper, its remnants found during the 1960s restoration. There are exhibition boards fixed to the east and west walls.



Fig. 2 Breakfast Parlour looking north-east.

2.3.3 Collection

Currently there are 435 objects on display in the house comprising ceramics, furniture, paintings (including mirror paintings), prints, sculpture (busts and reliefs), books and light fittings. The majority of the objects on display are part of English Heritage's permanent collections. The items on loan comprise 11 paintings, 15 items of furniture and a set of novels. They are on loan from private collections, the Marble Hill Society, Orleans House Gallery and Victoria and Albert Museum. Notable loans include the mahogany 'Barrington

Bed' (c.1740) and the 'Glenham Hall' suite of settees, stools and side chairs (c.1722), on loan from the V&A, and the three 18th-century painted views of the local landscape (Richmond Hill) on loan from Orleans House Gallery.

As part of the representation of the house, the collections will be enhanced by some key acquisitions and loans, ensuring that the high quality is maintained.

2.3.4 History

Marble Hill is located in Twickenham, immediately adjacent to the west bank of the river Thames. The estate of 66½ acres is centred on Marble Hill House which is a nationally-important example of Neo-Palladian architecture. Begun in 1724 for Henrietta Howard (1688-1767), a mistress of King George II, socialite and intellectual, its design is associated with leading practitioners of the style. The initial design was produced by Colen Campbell under the direction of Lord Herbert, later 9th Earl Pembroke. The 'architect earl' oversaw the building of the house by Roger Morris who has now been recognised as one of the most renowned architects of the era and who is responsible for the designs of the House interiors.

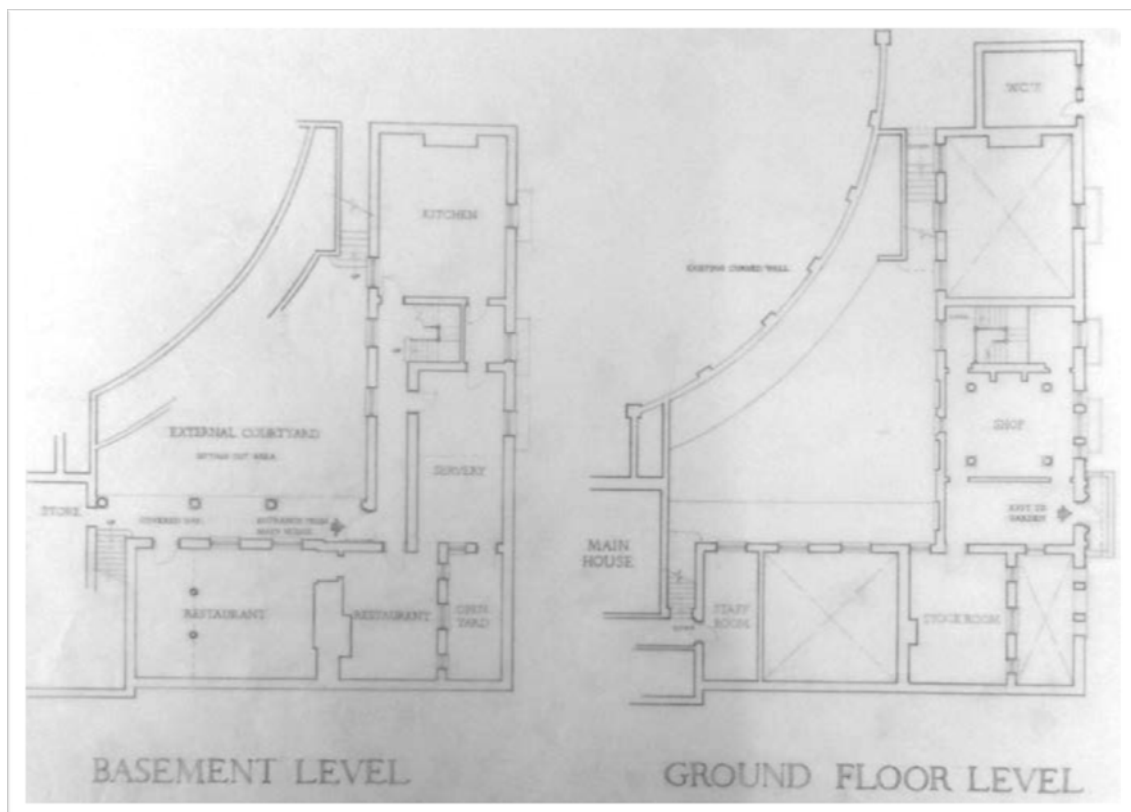


Fig. 3 Plan of the service wing, showing rooms uses. Drawn in 1980s, traced from an LCC plan of 1905.

Initially the service spaces were located in the western section of the House on the ground floor and in 1738 a service wing was constructed to the east of the building (see Figs. 3&4).



Fig. 4 Marble Hill House service wing (built 1738). View from the sunken courtyard.

After the death of Henrietta Howard, the House and estate passed through several hands. In the 19th century its north elevation was reconfigured and the first floor windows extended with balconies added (see Fig. 5 below).



Fig. 5 Marble Hill House, south elevation showing 19th-century alterations.

In a dilapidated condition at the beginning of the 20th century, it was purchased by a consortium of local authorities, private individuals and charities, and vested in London County Council, which undertook to maintain the property and open the house to the public. Works culminated in a major programme of restoration and re-presentation in 1965, under the aegis of the Greater London Council.

The 1965-6 restoration of the building represents the most radical intervention into the historic fabric under the aegis of the new Greater London Council (archival drawings can be provided on request). Its aims were to bring the house into a serviceable condition, and to re-present the interior and exterior as an historic house museum. Several post-1750 alterations to the building were reversed, and numerous works of art and items of furniture were acquired: the interiors were re-decorated, notably on the ground and first floors, in an attempt to re-create the appearance of rooms during Henrietta Howard's occupancy. The internal partitions introduced for the convenience of the occupants in the earlier 20th century were removed between 1950 and 1965 in an attempt to re-instate the original volumes of the rooms, notably on the first floor. The Dressing Room and Miss Hotham's bedchamber were restored to their original dimensions, and all the ceilings (with exception of the Great Room) needed repairs, after damage through dry rot. Historic England room records document that damage from dry rot was significantly worse on the second floor, resulting in the removal of the majority of the joinery and other fabric.

Since 1986, Marble Hill House has been operated by English Heritage. The grounds of the house, also managed by English Heritage, serve as a public park and recreational amenity, particularly the sports pitches around the house, and the south lawn, used for musical events.

2.4 Significance

The principal significances of Marble Hill House lie in the high quality of its architectural composition and craftsmanship which reflect the revival of the Palladian idiom in the 18th-century English architecture; in the associations with its owner and architectural patron, Henrietta Howard, her royal connections and the circle of aristocratic and literary friends and in the functional characteristics related to life and culture of the Georgian aristocracy.

Considering its age, the exterior of the house survives in unusually complete state of preservation, however, there have been several alterations to the south front and the service wing has been lost. Many elements of the interior plan form and design either survive in their original state or were reconstructed in the 1950s and 60s based on careful research and fabric evidence. The record of 20th-century restoration is valuable in understanding the conservation philosophy at the time, for example, how the purity of Georgian design was valued, and the evidence of subsequent evolution was removed.

The house contains materials which were obtained through the transatlantic slave trade, such as the mahogany used for the great staircase, some surviving original floor boards and doors. This is physical evidence of the connections between aristocratic home owners and the demand for exotic materials. In addition, certain objects from Henrietta's original collection contribute evidence for how the Great Room at Marble Hill was furnished.

2.4.1 Evidential

Many elements of the interior plan form and design of the House either survive in their original state or were reconstructed in the 1950s and 60s based on careful research and fabric evidence. The decorative finishes, in particular, are the result of multiple phases of change following the death of Henrietta Howard, the occupation of the Peel family and the various restorations of the 20th century. Therefore, the amalgamation of these efforts is rather less significant than an authentic surviving 18th-century scheme would be; the interiors range from high to some significance depending on the status of the rooms and level of alteration. For example, the Great Room, due to its status and state of preservation of original fabric, including mahogany floor and decorative finishes as well as the collection on display, is of high significance.

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2.4.2 Historical/Associative

The builder and first occupant of Marble Hill, Henrietta Howard, is a figure of national historical importance, playing a prominent role in the courts of Georges I and II (as one-time mistress to the latter). Her life has been the subject of considerable recent research and publication, and elements of it can be evoked in great detail.

Henrietta Howard's wider social circle, whom she entertained at Marble Hill, included figures of acknowledged celebrity, including Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift.

Marble Hill is a fine exemplar of the development of polite domestic architecture in the first 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.

2.4.3 Aesthetic

The house, and to a lesser extent the grounds, have retained the strong visual character of the 18th century. The house is a unique survival of a suburban villa illustrating the architectural ideas of the English 18th-century Neo-Palladian School and demonstrating

many of the features of the small villas designed by Andrea Palladio himself. Externally these ideas are expressed by a compact plan, carefully balanced proportions and perfect symmetry of the main elevations. The elegant simplicity of the composition combined with refined articulation, restrained detailing and monochrome colour of the elevations are the key to the aesthetic appeal of the house.

The interior of the house contains several set pieces, especially in the Great Room on the first-floor. This Room is primarily in its original state of preservation and has not been restored during the 1960s campaign. Several later alterations of the exterior were reversed in the mid-20th century.

The aesthetics of the house are particularly vulnerable to degradation due to such factors as insufficient remedial maintenance which has impacted on the fabric integrity of the roof and external decoration as well as the cleanness of the House, and the past use of unsympathetic materials, such as cementitious render.

2.4.4 Communal

Today the communal value of the site under the guardianship of English Heritage is based primarily on its contribution to both local life and the wider education of visitors from the UK and abroad. Marble Hill has considerable social value as one of the riverside villas in west London providing pleasant amenity grounds for the local community and visitors. It is appreciated both for its naturalness and tranquillity and for the range of sporting activities on offer. Henrietta Howard learned theory of cricket at Stowe in August 1735 and is recorded of saying that she had ‘some thoughts of Practicing this afternoon’ at Marble Hill. This sporting tradition has been continued with great enthusiasm by the cricketers today who are particularly fond of the setting.

Marble Hill attracts a diverse crowd ranging from dog walkers and joggers, who do not generally visit the house, to a more specialist audience with a particular or specialist interest in Palladian architecture or the reception of Classicism in English design. Particular interest in the historical aspects of the site is taken by the Marble Hill Society, a local history group who also act as volunteer guides.

In terms of current collections and interpretation, the furniture helps modern visitors to understand how the interiors of Marble Hill House were used in the 18th century; the portraits of Henrietta Howard and her friends help to bring the history of the house to life.

2.4.5 Summary of Significances

Exterior – The facades are of **exceptional significance** for their representation of early 18th-century Neo-Palladian design. Parts of the exterior where unsympathetic past repairs exist (e.g. fibreglass modillions and pediment cartouches on the south front, cementitious render) are considered detracting and their replacement, following adequate recording, **would enhance overall significance.**

Ground Floor – The original plan form survives and the high aesthetic value of the principal rooms means they are generally of **high to moderate** significance; the mess room and control room have undergone much change but have traces of historic joinery; the shop and toilets are much later in date and have no historic features - the walls are of some significance for representing the LCC phase of the site, whereas the interior is neutral.

Staircases – The mahogany staircase is a defining feature of the house in terms of design and materials and is well preserved. The secondary or service stair is also of considerable interest for cantilevered stone structure, elegant iron handrail and lantern bracket. Both are considered to be of **high significance**.

First Floor – The original plan form survives and the principal rooms are generally of **high to moderate** significance; the best survival is the Great Room; the Damask Room and Lady Suffolk's Bedroom have been much restored.

Second Floor - The original plan form survives and the principal rooms are generally of **moderate significance** due to the extent of restoration. The Gallery contains more historic fabric (e.g. cornice) than the bedrooms, which were used as Park Keeper's accommodation and restored in the 1970s. The GLC carried out work in the bedrooms in 1981-4.

Third Floor/ Attic – The plan form does not survive well here due to removal of several historic partitions and the floorboards and window frames are 20th-century replacements; the rooms are of **some significance**. The corridor has a better degree of fabric survival (e.g. joinery) probably from the 18th century and is thus of **moderate significance**.



Fig.6 (above) Significance – ground floor. Fig.7 (below) Significance – first floor.

Marble Hill
First Floor
Significance



- High significance
- Moderate significance
- Low significance
- Neutral

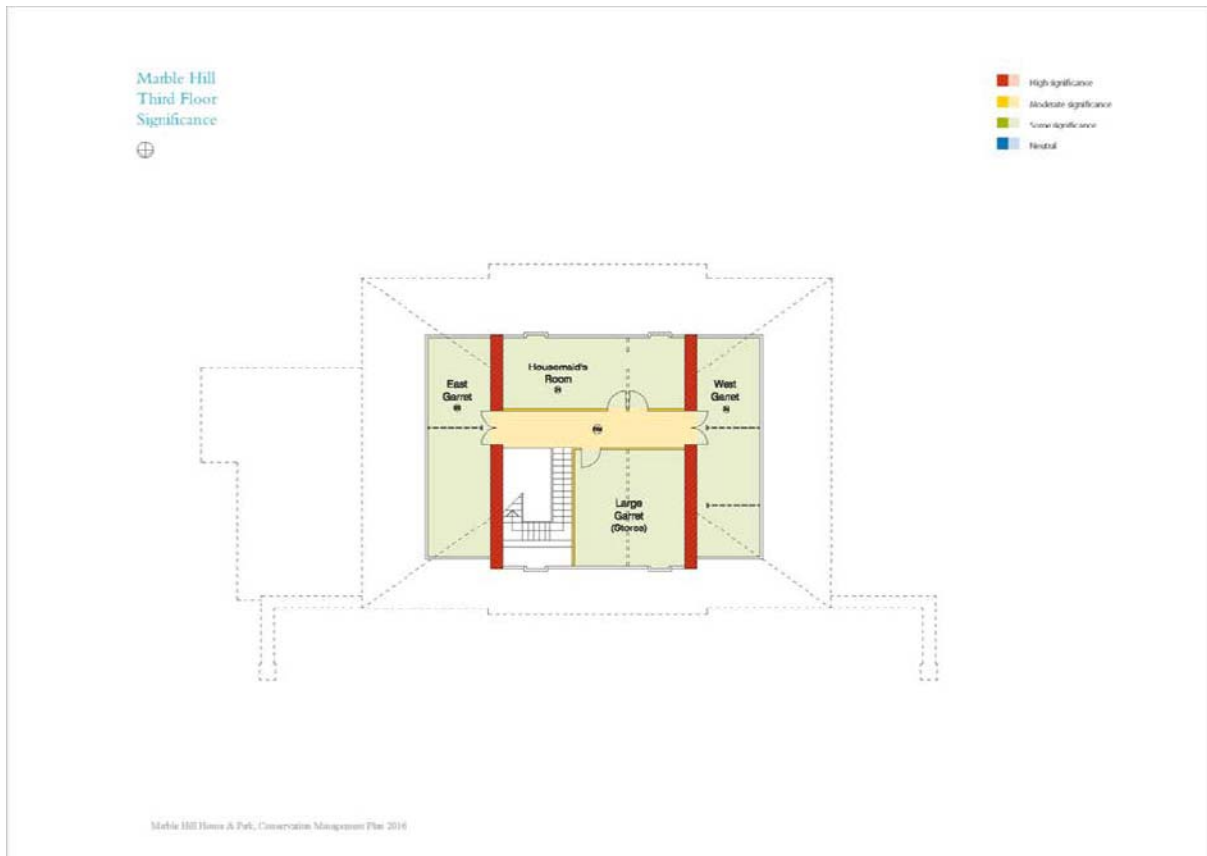


Marble Hill House & Park, Conservation Management Plan 2014



Fig. 8 (above) Significance – second floor.

Fig.9 (below) Significance – garret level.



3. The Project

3.1 Background and Enabling Works

Internal works in the house are associated with the proposed installation of the platform lift; works to improve fire and safety compliance including roof compartmentation, removal of asbestos cladding and sensitive upgrades to period-style doors; widening of a single modern door opening and conservation repairs to plaster and joinery. There are also minor works enabling new interpretation and representation including fixing of security mirror plates for paintings and fixings for new curtains. It is also proposed to install a new runner on the mahogany staircase and restore the historic decorative scheme in the Breakfast Parlour and period-style hangings in the Dressing Room in line with the findings of the historic paint investigation and analysis and evidence from historic inventories.



Fig. 10 A typical period-style door to be upgraded with fire retardant sealant and intumescent paint.

Fig. 11 (below) Asbestos panel at the back of a period-style door.



Externally, it is proposed to remove some of the cementitious render at the lower levels of the house walls and curved wing walls and replace it with permeable (breathable and compatible) materials to address damp ingress and decay of historic fabric. It is also proposed to carry out localised repairs to the windows and doors joinery and some repairs to the roof covering as well as to the pediment capital on the north elevation. Some of the rainwater goods will be refurbished.

3.1.1 New Lift

From the Entrance Hall, at present there is no un-stepped access to the upper floors or the attic. There are two staircases within the building.

The principal stair rises from the entrance hall from just inside the north door, to the first floor. It is made of mahogany with a fine patina and very finely carved balustrade. It is an essential and visually dominant element in the entrance hall, and an essential part of the sequence of 'public' rooms within the house.

The secondary stair is set in a servant space within the plan, and serves all levels including the attic. It is also finely made, of 'cantilevered' limestone steps and elegant wrought iron balustrading, as befits its use by everyone who used the house. However, it is steep, and very narrow, with particularly steep winding treads and a low (by modern standards) balustrade. Its central well is lit from the attic dormer window above.

In line with the conditions of the HLF grant, it is proposed to install a light-weight platform lift to the first floor of the house. The lift is to be located in what is now a control room on

the ground floor and rise to one of the small closets that once served as ancillary space to the main bedrooms of the house (for details see architectural drawings).

Ideally a public building would have a lift able to serve every potential visitor, providing universal access by being sufficiently large and quick to provide access to any type of wheel chair or powered buggy and with assistants. This would imply at least a 12 person lift capacity and a lift with a structural shaft and full pit.

In the context of a small Grade I listed domestic building, it is recognised that the degree of intervention needed to fulfil such requirement would cause significant loss of historic fabric and impact on the significance of the building.

The relatively narrow door openings and high quality and fragility of the wall and joinery finishes would suggest that use of powered wheelchairs in the house would present serious problems, even if it were possible to provide a lift sufficiently large. Therefore it was agreed that the only viable option is a lift for a person using a normal wheelchair. This was considered sufficient due to the need for English Heritage to always have stewards within the building and thus to assist those requiring the lift.

A Lift Installation Options Appraisal has been carried out by Martin Thomas Associates (submitted as part of the application), in cooperation with EH curatorial staff, as part of the project preparation. This appraisal looked at the four potential lift positions and assessed their advantages and disadvantages in order to understand the impact on the significance of the House and select the most sympathetic option. It was decided that a lightweight platform lift in the closet space and allowing access to the first floor is the only option which will not severely damage the historic and aesthetic significance of the house.

It is proposed to accommodate the lift within the spaces formed by the series of small closet rooms - on the east of the main entrance hall and vertically above. Some intervention will be required to the mahogany doors as they will have to be re-hung but as these spaces have been subject to many alterations in the 20th century it is deemed that these doors, although period-style, are not historic.

A lightweight platform lift will be accommodated within the south-east corner of the present control room and in the closet on the first floor. The installation will require removal of parts of the floor and ceiling and very minor intervention in the ground to install steel anchors (for details see architectural drawings). The 1905 plans of the House show that new floor was laid down in this corner at the time both on the ground and first floor (Figs. 12&13). As the lift is set off from the wall, the intervention into the existing panelling will be kept to minimum (to allow joining at the skirting level only). In addition, existing boarding associated with security equipment will be removed and the panelling repaired.

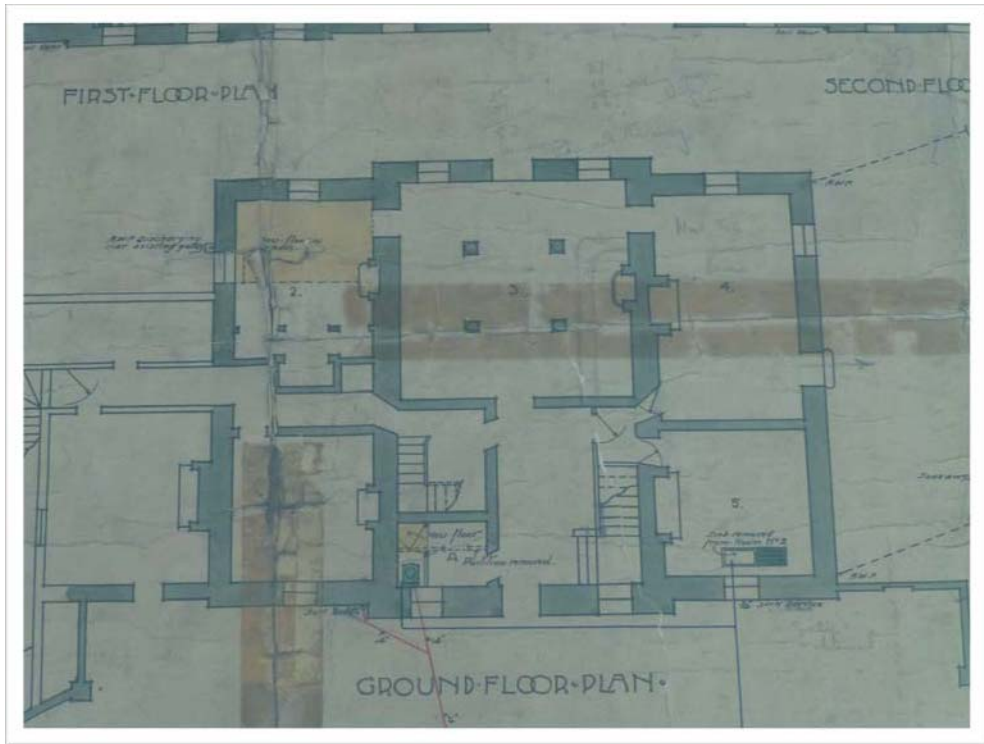


Fig. 12 Marble Hill House, ground floor. 1905.

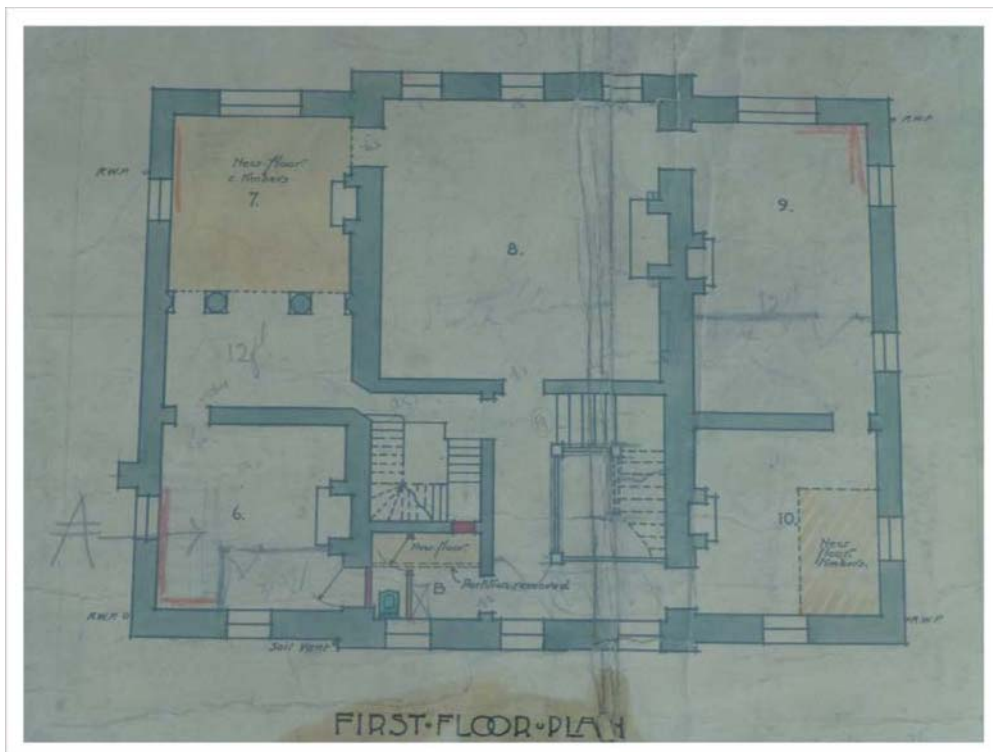


Fig. 13 Marble Hill House, first floor. 1905.

3.1.2 Fire & Safety

There has been a long standing problem with a lack of fire separation between the Great Room and the ceiling void and roof space above due to the hole which allows the chandelier to be suspended from a winch at Garret level. This is exacerbated by the lack of compartmentation around the eaves of the roof and the Report by Historic England’s Fire Advisor (attached as part of this application) has demonstrated the need for such compartmentation (for details see architectural drawings).

Several of the doors have asbestos insulation boards attached to one face. These need to be removed for reasons of health & safety (see EH Asbestos Management Plan). Following the removal the units will be upgraded by using fire retardant seals, intumescent cloth and paint. The doors leading to the room accommodating a new lift will also be upgraded the same way.

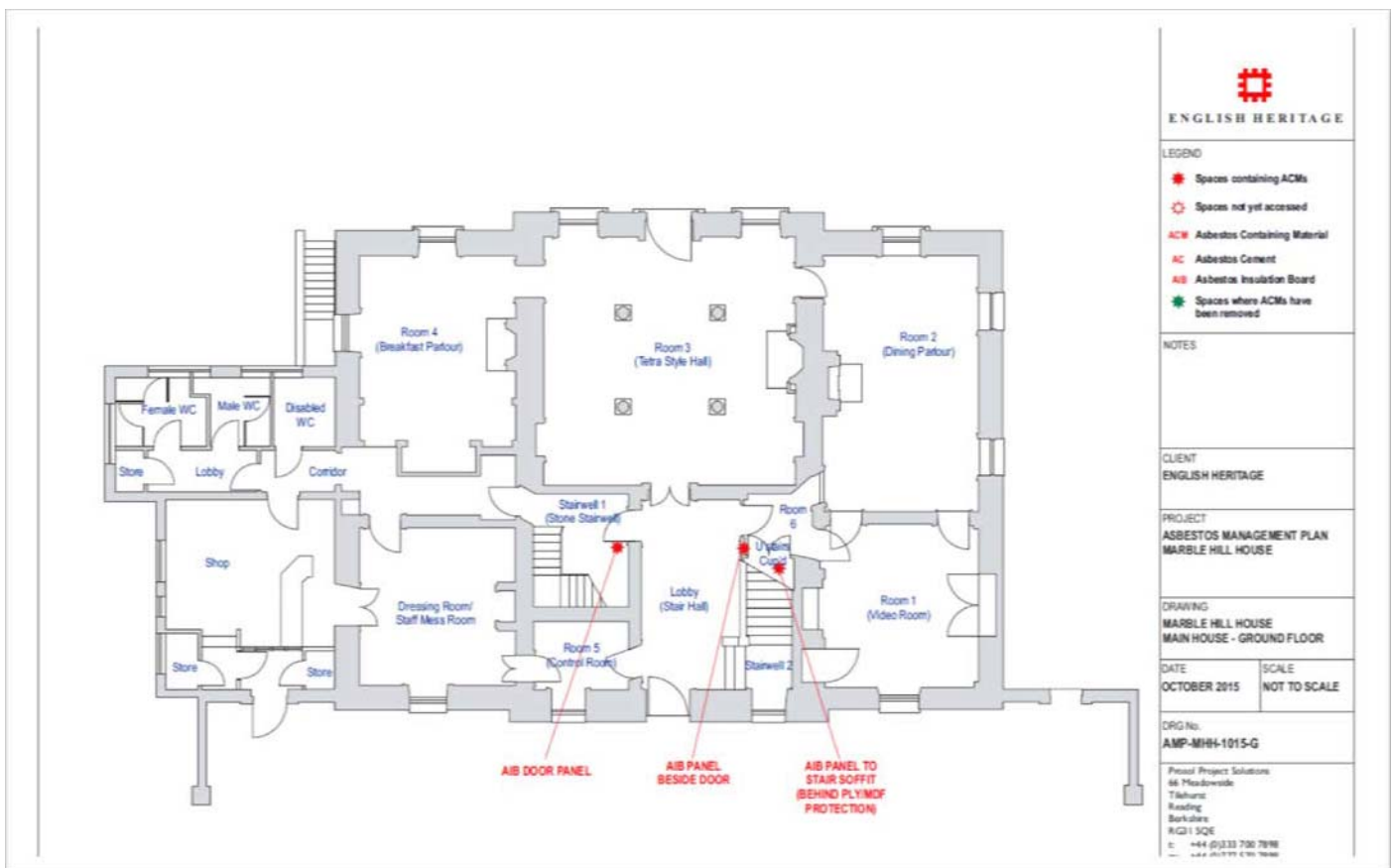


Fig.14 Ground Floor Plan, showing three doors with existing asbestos panels.

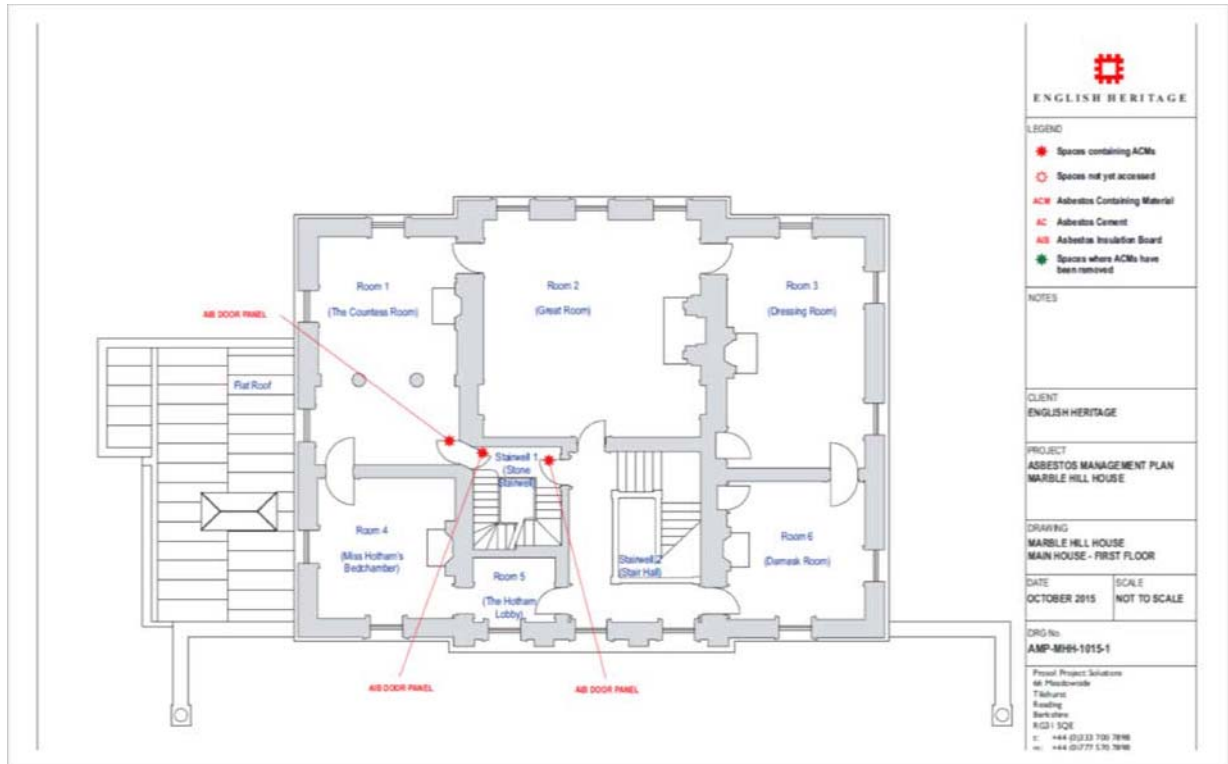


Fig. 15 First Floor Plan, showing doors with existing asbestos panels.

Fire-resistant partitions will be added in three locations: in the opening between the present Control and Mess Rooms and in the niche in the present Mess Room, both on the ground floor; on the first floor between the closet accommodating the lift and Miss Hotham’s Bedchamber (for details see architectural drawings Nos: 16_132 – 210A; 16_132 – 211; 16_132 - 311). These are to be installed in accordance with the updated fire strategy for the building in the wake of the lift installation.

The installation of the partition in the Control Room will require careful opening of the existing (modern) hardboard lining to the doorway which presently covers the reveal. As archival drawings show, this opening is of modern date (Fig. 12).

The partition in the niche in the Mess Room is will involve minimal fixings into the masonry. The installation of the partition on the first floor is illustrated in drawing No: 16_132 – 311 and involves careful fixing with one screw to the each side of the jamb and one into the floor and ceiling.

3.1.3 Damp Works – Decay of Plaster and Paint

Generally there appears to be history of the use of inappropriate materials at the property and poor landscaping strategies adjacent to it and these contribute to water ingress and continuing damp presence.

The recent damp mitigation works executed at the property do not appear to have been comprehensive and the underlying damp issues have not been fully addressed. In order to address the causes of continuing water ingress it will be necessary to remove some of the cementitious render at the lower levels of the House's exterior and replace it with permeable substrate and breathable paint in accordance with good conservation practice. Similar works will be undertaken to the wing walls of the House (see architectural drawings for details).

Internally the existing gypsum plaster will be removed at low level in the Dinging Parlour and Tetrastyle Hall and replaced with a breathable lime plaster and paint system.

3.1.4 Conservation Repairs to the House

Localised conservation repairs and some like-for-like replacements are proposed to address decay of fabric of some of the windows and doors as well as the roof tiling (see Figs. 16a,b &18 and architectural drawings).



Fig. 16a & 16b Decay of window joinery.

Lime mortar repairs to decayed column capital on the north pediment will be carried out. The capital is likely to have been re-modelled in cement (Fig.17) and our repairs will use ceramic armatures drilled into the existing substrate and appropriate lime mortar in order to arrest further decay.

Fig. 17 Marble Hill House, decaying north pediment capital.



Fig. 18 Marble Hill House, slipped roof tiling.



3.1.5 Rainwater Goods

It is proposed to reconfigure the above ground rainwater disposal pipes; this would need to include the installation of accessible, roddable gulleys and the re-routing of rainwater disposal to reduce volume discharged at certain points. The below ground pipes need to be located and linked up with the effective rainwater disposal system or soakaway. The gulleys will be replaced with a new accessible gulley, and downpipes fitted with a shoes.

3.1.6 New Interpretation and Representation

As in the recent years the House has been accessible by guided tour only, there is no independent interpretation and representation of some of the interiors is not historically accurate or outdated. It is therefore proposed to introduce new interpretation to improve the understanding and enjoyment of the House once it is opened to visitors on free-flow basis as per condition of the HLF grant.

As part of the new interpretation of the House, it is proposed to convert the current shop to an interpretation space. This is a space whose function is not clear and it appears to have been created in the early 20th century by enclosing the gap between the front curved wing wall of the House and the Service Wing. It sits upon a concrete slab supported by steel beams. In order to enable the creation of a new, interesting and appealing interpretation space it is proposed to remove the 20th-century additions, namely the shop counter, lobby screen and steps and fix a painted interpretative baffle to cover the unsightly modern roof light. It is also proposed to widen the existing door communicating with the corridor to improve the visitor circulation. This door was formed in the 20th century but the wall may be a remnant of the 18th-century wing.

It is also proposed to use the Paper Room for projection of the new interpretation film as this is a space which had changing functions during the House's history and no furniture belonging to this space has yet been found to enable for representation of the historic interior. This will require securing of a projector to the ceiling. The projector will be powered utilising the existing steel conduit buried in the masonry.

Following the opening of the House of the free flow basis, it is necessary to improve security of the collection. To enable this, mirror plates will be fixed behind five small scale new paintings in the Breakfast Parlour. Due to their scale these paintings need to be fixed to the wall (following the removal of the 1960s exhibition boards) rather than hung from a picture rail. It is proposed to use a maximum of 3 mirror plates per painting, each of those require 1 wall fixing, which makes for the total of 15 small new holes in this room. These fixings will be of maximum 2 inches (50 mm) in depth.

The majority of the first floor rooms at the House are fitted with metal picture rails which allows us to change the paintings hang without making new holes in the fabric or damaging wall coverings. However, picture rails are required in the Damask Room in order to hang works in this space. It is proposed to introduce a maximum of 3 picture rails, each rail being attached to the wall with 2 or 3 brackets. A bracket requires two screw holes. This will require a total of 18 small holes. Each picture rail will require a deeper fixing (c.6 inches – approx. 15 cm) at either end.

It is also proposed to replace the wall paper in the Dressing Room. This wall paper was installed during the 1960s-restoration without consideration for historical accuracy. There is evidence in the historic house inventories for the use of red damask wall hangings in this room and we propose to re-instate hand-made, high quality hangings with a generic 18th-century pattern. It is anticipated that there is a system of wall battens in the room which had been used to install the existing wall paper. In this case we will re-use the existing holes. If a new battening system this will be likely to be around the wall perimeter of each bay with a central vertical batten on the longer walls (e.g. North and West Wall) and battens will be attached using screws a maximum of 2 inches in length.

In order to enhance the presentation of the principal rooms it is also proposed to install new curtains for 3 windows in the Dressing Room; curtains for 2 windows in Miss Hotham's Bedchamber and curtains for 2 windows in the Damask Room. This will require 3 fixing points per window, each with 3 screws. The fixings will be small, approximately 1 ¼ inches (44 mm) in length. Historic inventories show that these windows were hung with curtains in the 18th century.

3.1.7 New Runner on the Mahogany Staircase

The grand mahogany staircase at Marble Hill is one of the principal architectural features of the house. The anticipated increase in visitor numbers as a result of the Heritage Lottery

Funded project would be significant, with footfall expected to increase from 3,000 people to over 80,000 visitors per year.

The current condition of the floor reflects centuries of previous domestic use and decades of wear as a visitor attraction. The floors at Marble Hill House have been, and will continue to be, the most heavily used original features of the site. The wide wooden boards and nosings of the staircase are particularly susceptible to compression, indentation and abrasion from the weight and volume of feet. The action of shoes causes abrasion of the wood, which is likely to be concentrated on stair treads and in particular on the nosings.

Without some form of protection, the surface patina is likely to be destroyed very quickly, the wood fibres will be abraded and the appearance of the grain could be irreversibly changed. Wet footwear can also cause permanent water damage.

As the most heavily used surfaces, the floors and staircase should be protected with a sacrificial barrier layer. On the staircase, several options have been considered by the collections team including a heavy-duty wax coating, a polyester/rubber runner printed with an accurate photographic record of the floor beneath (known as an 'Eyemat') and a traditional carpet runner or drugget. A full options appraisal has been carried out in conjunction with the wider curatorial team (further details can be provided upon request).

The options considered were as follows:

Eyemat - although aesthetically effective when securely fixed to the substrate, the printed polyester/ rubber 'Eymats' are impermeable to moisture. Even if an intermediary protective layer is placed between the mahogany and the rubber surface, there is a strong likelihood that microclimates with high levels of relative humidity may build up beneath the rubber and cause damage to the wood.

Wax coating – although it may protect the surface and patina of the treads wax would not prevent the nosings from becoming abraded and worn.

The carpet would be secured using the existing brackets for stair rods but there would be a requirement for additional fixings to secure the underlay. The underlay must be attached securely to the treads and risers of the staircase for health and safety reasons and to ensure a reasonable lifespan for the carpet. Options for securing the underlay to the staircase are adhesive, staples or using an anti-slip material for the underlay that would grip the substrate.

Any adhesive with sufficient strength to hold the underlay with this degree of foot traffic would be non-breathable and effectively irreversible, i.e., impossible to remove without some degree of damage to the wooden substrate. Further damage would be caused by removing and replacing the adhesive when the carpet and underlay are replaced (every 10 to 15 years).

The option more often used for staircases in historic house contexts with high visitor numbers is to staple into the substrate. However, the anti-slip product that has been recommended is a thermoplastic polymer, specifically a polyethersulfone/ glass-fibre yarn underlay with a polyvinyl chloride coating (its tradename [Elastic 4.5](#)). This product, like the adhesive, would also be non-breathable and have the potential to cause damaging microclimates with high levels of relative humidity in pockets between the underlay and the original wooden substrate. The carpet would not be fully supported by this underlay and therefore its anticipated longevity would be reduced to around 5 years (from the 10-15 years usual for this level of use).

It has therefore been decided, after consideration of a range of options, that the most suitable underlay for the anticipated level of use would be a natural heat-treated wood-fibre material with the tradename [Breathe](http://qaflooringsolutions.com/breathe-underlay-19681.html) (<http://qaflooringsolutions.com/breathe-underlay-19681.html>). It is proposed to fix the runner and underlay with metal staples which are the tried-and-tested option for securing underlay to staircase substrates and have a long history of use in historic house contexts. The metal staples would require small new puncture marks into the original wooden fabric. The staples would be made of stainless steel, 2mm in diameter, approximately 8 - 14mm in height and 11 mm in width. On each step, 3 staples would be required on the tread and 2 would be required on the riser. The depth of their intrusion into the substrate would be 5 – 6 mm.

3.1.8 Restoration of the Decorative Scheme in Breakfast Parlour

Recent historic paint analysis (Crick-Smith 2016) has demonstrated that the present decorative scheme in the Breakfast Parlour (installed principally by GLC in the 1960s and including unsympathetic exhibition boards and 19th-century wall paper) is not in keeping with the evidence for the early 18th-century interior decoration.

The paint analysis showed that the first oil paint decorative scheme, as executed for Henrietta Howard, was based around a pale grey lead oil paint with chocolate brown doors and skirting. This is a typical Palladian scheme, correct for the early 18th century.

Since the majority of the House is represented to illustrate the occupancy of Henrietta Howard in the 1730-67, it has been decided to restore this interior to reflect its first decorative scheme as commissioned and enjoyed by Henrietta herself.

4. POLICY FRAMEWORK

4.1. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

4.1.1 The national policies of relevance to this report are set out within the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2018).

4.1.2 The NPPF requires applicants for development proposals to provide a description of the significance of the heritage asset affected by proposed development. A heritage asset is

defined within Annex 2 of the NPPF as:

A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage assets include designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing).

4.1.3 Significance (for heritage policy) is defined within Annex 2 of the Framework as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

4.1.4 Paragraph 189 of the NPPF indicates that, in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to:

describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.

4.1.5 Paragraph 192 of the NPPF indicates that, in determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- *The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;*
- *The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and*
- *The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.*

4.1.6 In respect of designated heritage assets, paragraph 193 states that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation; *the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be.*

4.1.7 Paragraphs 195 and 196 then set out the criteria for weighing 'substantial harm' or 'less than substantial harm' against the benefits of proposed developments:

Para 195. *Where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:*

- *the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and*
- *no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and*
- *conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership is*

demonstrably not possible; and

- *the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.*

Para 196. *Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.*

4.2 Regional and Local Policies

4.2.1 Regional and local policy relating to heritage assets are contained within the *Mayor of London's London Plan* and the *London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Local Plan* (July 2018). The *Local Plan* supersedes the *Core Strategy and Development Management Plan* (DMP).

4.2.2 The Local Plan was adopted on 3 July 2018 and is a policy document which determines the future development of the borough over the next 15 years. The Plan outlines the:

- Strategic Vision and Objectives
- Spatial strategy
- 45 core planning policies on topics such as climate change, housing, employment and retailing

4.2.3 The policies within the Local Plan that are of relevance to this development are:

Policy LP 1

Local Character and Design Quality

A. The Council will require all development to be of high architectural and urban design quality. The high quality character and heritage of the borough and its villages will need to be maintained and enhanced where opportunities arise. Development proposals will have to demonstrate a thorough understanding of the site and how it relates to its existing context, including character and appearance, and take opportunities to improve the quality and character of buildings, spaces and the local area.

To ensure development respects, contributes to and enhances the local environment and character, the following will be considered when assessing proposals:

1. compatibility with local character including the relationship to existing townscape, development patterns, views, local grain and frontages as well as scale, height, massing, density, landscaping, proportions, form, materials and detailing;
2. sustainable design and construction, including adaptability, subject to aesthetic considerations;
3. layout, siting and access, including making best use of land;
4. space between buildings, relationship of heights to widths and relationship to the public realm, heritage assets and natural features;
5. inclusive design, connectivity, permeability (as such gated developments will not be

permitted), natural surveillance and orientation; and

6. suitability and compatibility of uses, taking account of any potential adverse impacts of the co-location of uses through the layout, design and management of the site.

Policy LP 3

Designated Heritage Asset

A. The Council will require development to conserve and, where possible, take opportunities to make a positive contribution to, the historic environment of the borough. Development proposals likely to adversely affect the significance of heritage assets will be assessed against the requirement to seek to avoid harm and the justification for the proposal. The significance (including the settings) of the borough's designated heritage assets, encompassing Conservation Areas, listed buildings, Scheduled Monuments as well as the Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, will be conserved and enhanced by the following means:

1. Give great weight to the conservation of the heritage asset when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of the asset.

2. Resist the demolition in whole, or in part, of listed building. Consent for demolition of Grade II listed buildings will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and for Grade II* and Grade I listed buildings in wholly exceptional circumstances following a thorough assessment of the justification for the proposal and the significance of the asset.

3. Resist the change of use of listed buildings where their significance would be harmed, particularly where the current use contributes to the character of the surrounding area and to its sense of place.

4. Require the retention and preservation of the original structure, layout, architectural features, materials as well as later features of interest within listed buildings, and resist the removal or modification of features that are both internally and externally of architectural importance or that contribute to the significance of the asset.

5. Demolitions (in whole or in part), alterations, extensions and any other modifications to listed buildings should be based on an accurate understanding of the significance of the heritage asset.

6. Require, where appropriate, the reinstatement of internal and external features of special architectural or historic significance within listed buildings, and the removal of internal and external features that harm the significance of the asset, commensurate with the extent of proposed development.

7. Require the use of appropriate materials and techniques and strongly encourage any works or repairs to a designated heritage asset to be carried out in a correct, scholarly manner by appropriate specialists.

8. Protect and enhance the borough's registered Historic Parks and Gardens by ensuring that proposals do not have an adverse effect on their significance, including their setting and/or views to and from the registered landscape.

9. Protect Scheduled Monuments by ensuring proposals do not have an adverse impact on their significance.

B. Resist substantial demolition in Conservation Areas and any changes that could harm heritage assets, unless it can be demonstrated that:

1. in the case of substantial harm or loss to the significance of the heritage asset, it is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss;

2. in the case of less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, that the public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use, outweigh that harm; or

3. the building or part of the building or structure makes no positive contribution to the character or distinctiveness of the area.

C. All proposals in Conservation Areas are required to preserve and, where possible, enhance the character or the appearance of the Conservation Area.

D. Where there is evidence of intentional damage or deliberate neglect to a designated heritage asset, its current condition will not be taken into account in the decision-making process.

E. Outline planning applications will not be accepted in Conservation Areas. The Council's Conservation Area Statements, and where available Conservation Area Studies, and/or Management Plans, will be used as a basis for assessing development proposals within, or where it would affect the setting of, Conservation Areas, together with other policy guidance, such as Village Planning Guidance SPDs.

Policy LP 5

Views and Vistas

The Council will protect the quality of the views, vistas, gaps and the skyline, all of which contribute significantly to the character, distinctiveness and quality of the local and wider area, by the following means:

1. protect the quality of the views and vistas as identified on the Policies Map, and demonstrate such through computer-generated imagery (CGI) and visual impact assessments;

2. resist development which interrupts, disrupts or detracts from strategic and local vistas, views, gaps and the skyline;

3. require developments whose visual impacts extend beyond that of the immediate street to demonstrate how views are protected or enhanced;

4. require development to respect the setting of a landmark, taking care not to create intrusive elements in its foreground, middle ground or background;

5. seek improvements to views, vistas, gaps and the skyline, particularly where views or vistas have been obscured;

6. seek improvements to views within Conservation Areas, which:

a. are identified in Conservation Area Statements and Studies and Village Plans;

b. are within, into, and out of Conservation Areas;

c. are affected by development on sites within the setting of, or adjacent to, Conservation Areas and listed buildings.

Policy LP 7

Archaeology

The Council will seek to protect, enhance and promote its archaeological heritage (both above and below ground), and will encourage its interpretation and presentation to the public. It will take the necessary measures required to safeguard the archaeological remains found, and refuse planning permission where proposals would adversely affect archaeological remains or their setting.

Desk based assessments and, where necessary, archaeological field evaluation will be required before development proposals are determined, where development is proposed on sites of archaeological significance or potential significance.

4.3 Twickenham Riverside Conservation Area Policies

Twickenham Riverside Conservation Area was designated on 14th January 1969 and extended in 1982 and 1991. Richmond Borough Council's Conservation Area Statement includes the following information relevant to Marble Hill.

History and Development

"The village is of medieval origin focused on the Parish Church of St. Mary which dates from the 14th century. The pattern of Georgian and early Victorian development illustrates that growth took place based on this core. There was also some 18th century villa development along the river. With the advent of the railway in 1863 the focus shifted towards the current centre of Twickenham. York Street was built in 1890 and became the main route to Richmond, bypassing the original centre."

Character

"The area was originally designated in recognition of the historic and architectural value of the original village core and river frontage. It was extended to include the

C18th splendour of Marble Hill Park and the setting of important surrounding buildings, particularly Montpelier Row (...).

17th and 18th century development along the Thames is characteristic of the period's grand formal approach to landscape and buildings. The Palladian Marble Hill House, set in extensive grounds running down to the river, is a nationally important example of such development.

Together with York House, Orleans House and Montpelier Row

it contributes to an exceptionally fine area of integrated architectural and landscape design.

These buildings also have a strategic role in visually linking up with other houses in the area such as Ham House and Strawberry Hill and viewpoints such as Richmond Hill. (...) Trees play

an important role in framing views and providing the setting to the buildings.”

Problems and Pressures

- *Development pressure which may harm the balance of the river and landscape-dominated setting in many parts of the area, and the obstruction or spoiling of views, skylines and landmarks*
- *Loss of traditional architectural features and materials due to unsympathetic alterations*
- *Loss of front boundary treatments and front gardens for car parking*
- *Lack of coordination and poor quality of street furniture and flooring*

Opportunity for Enhancement

- *Improvement and protection of the river and landscape setting*
- *Preservation, enhancement and reinstatement of architectural quality and unity*

4. 4 Setting of Heritage Assets

4.4. 1 Setting of Heritage Assets is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF as:

The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surrounding evolve. Elements of setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

4.4.2 The *Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning – Note 3: The Setting of Heritage Assets*, 2nd edition published by Historic England in 2017 provides a five-step approach for accessing the impact of a development proposal on the setting of a heritage asset, as follows:

- 1. Identify which heritage assets and their settings are affected;*
- 2. Assess the degree to which these settings and views make a contribution to the significance of the heritage asset(s) or allow significance to be appreciated;*
- 3. Assess the effects of the proposed development, whether beneficial or harmful, on the significance or on the ability to appreciate it;*
- 4. Explore the way to maximise enhancement and avoid or minimise harm;*
- 5. Make and document the decision and monitor outcomes.*

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 The aim of this Heritage Appraisal is to demonstrate the understanding of the significance of the relevant heritage assets and specific values which contribute to that significance, the extent of the building fabric that holds this interest and its comparative level of importance and assess the impact of the proposed works on such significance. This will be done by detailed assessment of the effect of each category of the proposed works on the architectural and historic interest of the House.

5.2 Guidance on what constitutes architectural, artistic, historic and social values can be drawn from *Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance* published by English Heritage (2008).

5.3 In addition the statutory listing criteria used for the selection of buildings of special interest provided definitions of architectural and historic interest, as follows:

Architectural Interest. *To be of special architectural interest a building must be of importance in its architectural design, decoration or craftsmanship; special interest may also apply to nationally important examples of particular building types and techniques (e.g. buildings displaying technological innovation or virtuosity) and significant plan forms;*

Historic Interest. *To be of special historic interest a building must illustrate important aspects of the nation's social, economic, cultural, or military history and/or have close historical associations with nationally important people. There should normally be some quality of interest in the physical fabric of the building itself to justify the statutory protection afforded by listing.*

5.4 The works proposed to change the interior decoration scheme in the Breakfast Parlour fall into the category of restoration. These works will be designed to acknowledge and satisfy the following criteria set out in *English Heritage Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance*. For restoration projects, *Conservation Principles* states that:

Restoration to a significant place should normally be acceptable if:

- a. *the heritage values of the elements that would be restored decisively outweigh the values of those that would be lost;*
- b. *the work proposed is justified by compelling evidence of the evolution of the place, and is executed in accordance of that evidence;*
- c. *the form in which the place currently exists is not the result of an historically-significant event;*
- d. *the work proposed respects previous forms of the place;*
- e. *the maintenance implications of the proposed restoration are considered to be sustainable.*

6. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS

6.1 New Lift

6.1.1 Installation of the platform lift will have some impact on the fabric of the building as a portion of the floor and ceiling need to be removed to enable its installation and some re-hanging of the doors to allow wheelchair access. It will also have an effect on its evidential values, especially since the small closet on the first floor will be taken out of visitor route precluding interpretation and understanding of its functions and importance for the past occupants.

6.1.2 However, the small closet spaces which will accommodate the lift are deemed as of

moderate significance due to extensive 20th-century alterations and refurbishing as shown by archival drawings (Figs. 12&13). These drawings provide evidence for scant survival of the historic fabric as both closets have been extensively altered to provide for various, changing functions and the 1960s restoration which was undertaken to address a wide spread of dry rot. During the latter the floor boards in the south-east corner the closet on the ground and first floor were replaced.

6.1.3 In addition, the ceiling of the current Control Room on the ground floor is plain and therefore no decorative features of architectural and aesthetic merit will be lost.

6.1.4 Furthermore, installation of the platform lift will not have any visual impact on the key interiors and none on the exterior. It will provide good un-stepped access to the first floor which will enhance the community value of the House allowing a more diverse audience to enjoy the magnificent rooms on that floor.

6.1.5 The lift will maintain both stairs as unimpeded means of escape and will allow for the fabric of those stairs, which is considered by the Conservation Management Plan to be of high significance, to remain undisturbed.

6.2 Conservation Repairs and Like-for-Like Replacements

6.2.1 These works will address fabric decay and affect a mixture of historic and modern windows (on the south front). Wholesome replacements are only proposed in cases of units which are beyond repair. These will be replaced like-for-like.

6.2.2 Overall these works will ensure long-term wellbeing of the fabric and enhance the aesthetic values of the House.

6.3 Rainwater Goods

6.3.1 The refurbishment and upgrading of the rainwater goods will enhance the aesthetic values of the House and contribute to the conservation of its fabric by directing water run off away from the building.

6.4 Damp Works – Damage to Plaster and Paint

6.4.1 Works designed to address damp ingress will enhance the aesthetic values of the House and contribute to the conservation of its fabric by staving off its decay.

6.4 Fire & Safety

6.4.1 Compartmentation works in the attic will have a negligible impact on the fabric of the House and are necessary to protect the building and people. They will be expressed as modern and honest addition and made reversible so the original layout of this floor is easily discernible and its evidential values remain unaffected. Overall, these works will deliver substantial public benefit and will contribute to the long-term, sustainable conservation and use of the building.

6.4.2 The doors from which asbestos inserts will be removed have been subject to previous intervention. Replacement of asbestos panels with discreet sealant and intumescent paint will enhance those values and in the use of more appropriate materials ensure the long-term, sustainable conservation and use of the building.

6.4.3 Insertion of the two new fire partitions to enable lift installation will involve some fixing into the fabric but overall will have a negligible impact on the heritage significance of the building while facilitating its long-term, sympathetic use.

6.5 New Interpretation and Representation

6.5.1 The works such as installation of the projector and baffle as well as removal of modern additions to the present shop will enable a new, interpretation of the House to be put in place. The scheme is informed by thorough new research which has revealed many unknown and interesting stories. These stories will be told in an innovative and appealing way and enrich the visitor experience. By doing this the new interpretation will enhance the knowledge, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the history of the building, its creators and occupants. It will also connect the House to the surrounding landscape.

6.5.2 The new interpretation scheme will be complemented by re-presentation of some of the interiors and introduction of new collection items. Paintings, ceramic and furniture will be used to better tell the stories of Henrietta Howard, her family and friends.

6.5.3 Taking all the above into account, it is considered that although the new interpretation and representation scheme will have some minor impact on the fabric of the building, it will enhance the educational, historical, evidential and communal values of the House. It is therefore considered that the minor interventions required to put the scheme in place are offset by the heritage and public benefits of the proposal.

6.6 Restoration of the Decorative Scheme in Breakfast Parlour

6.6.1 As the present scheme in Breakfast Parlour is a result of 1960s restoration which lacks chronological coherence and is confusing in mixing up layers of different dates, it is considered that the heritage values of the elements that will be reconstructed decisively outweigh the values of those that would be lost.

6.6.2 The proposed work is justified by compelling evidence of the evolution of the place (as provided by historic paint analysis) and will be executed in accordance of that evidence.

6.6.3 The new work will respect historic forms of the room and enhance its architectural features in keeping with the principles of Neo-Paladian style.

6.6.4 The maintenance implications of the proposed restoration are considered to be sustainable.

6.6.5 Bearing the above in mind it is considered that these works acknowledge and satisfy

the criteria for restoration scheme set out in English Heritage *Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance*. In addition, as these works will be designed to restore the room to its appearance during the occupancy of Henrietta Howard and reflect the original design intention, it is considered that they will enhance the architectural, aesthetic and evidential values of the building.

6.7 Installation of a new runner with a breathable underlay

6.7.1 It is necessary to install protection to the stair to avoid mechanical damage resulting from increased footfall. The traditional runner with an underlay is the solution that will ensure the least on-going damage to the floor. There are existing brackets for stair rods, which will be used to secure the runner to minimise the intrusion in the mahogany substrate. The use of metal staples to prevent slippage and creating a health and safety hazard will have some, but minimal impact on the historic fabric as the staples are very small. The use of staples will allow for the underlay to be of breathable fabric and thus avoid damage to timber resulting from damp and adverse microclimate conditions.

6.7.2 Taking all the above into account it is considered that the impact on the historic fabric resulting from the use of staples will be offset by the long-term preservation and protection of the precious wood and evidential and aesthetic values of the staircase. In the context of the whole scheme it will also be offset by the benefits of opening the House free-flow to a wider and more diverse audiences and thus enhancing its educational and communal values.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 It is considered that the installation of the lift will have some impact on the significance of the House, affecting primarily its evidential values through the impact on some of the historic fabric in the small closets and potential of interpretation of some of those less important spaces.

7.2 However, as the intrusion in the fabric will be kept to minimum, no decorative features of architectural interest will be lost and the fabric to be lost is mostly of modern provenance, it is considered that the harm to the significance of the House as a heritage asset will be less than substantial. It is also considered that the benefits of providing access for more diverse audience to the principle rooms on the first floor, and thus enhancing the community and educational values of Marble Hill House, outweigh the harm to the fabric and evidential values of the building.

7.2 In addition, other proposed works to the House such as the conservation repairs, and well as remedial works intended to address continuing ingress of damp, are designed to ensure the long-term wellbeing of the fabric and enhance the architectural, aesthetic and evidential values of the building.

7.3 Works related to fire & safety compliance will have a minimal impact on the fabric and

thus significance of the House and are designed to protect the building, its valuable collections, site staff and visitors. These works will therefore deliver substantial public benefits and ensure long-term, sympathetic use of the building.

7.4. The new interpretation and representation of several rooms will have only a very negligible impact on the fabric of the building while enhancing its educational, historical and communal values.

7.5 The restoration of the historic decorative scheme in the Breakfast Parlour is based on solid evidence, will not cause a loss of any historic decorative layers or features of importance and will enhance the evidential and aesthetic values of the building.

7.6 The installation of a new runner with a breathable underlay will have a minimal impact on the historic fabric but will ensure long-term protection of the precious timber.

7.6 Overall, it is considered that the proposed works will be carried out in sympathetic manner and with appropriate materials. The scheme will enhance the significance of Marble Hill House as a heritage asset and the harm caused by the works associated with the installation of the lift will be less than substantial and outweighed by the public benefits of extended access, associated conservation repairs, upgrades and new interpretation and representation scheme. The proposal is thus in accordance with the national and local policies and should be supported.