



ENGLISH
HERITAGE

MARBLE HILL REVIVED PROPOSALS SUMMARY

December 2018



PROPOSALS TO REVIVE MARBLE HILL HOUSE AND PARK

Marble Hill has seen little investment since the 1980s. Opening times for the historic house are limited and the park's original character has been lost. Right across Marble Hill, the facilities need upgrading.

English Heritage's revised proposals for Marble Hill House and Park will:

- Conserve and re-present the house and open it up to the public for free, five days a week for seven months a year
- Improve the condition of the sports pitches and changing facilities
- Restore the structure of the lost 18th-century garden, and open up and replant overgrown areas to improve the visitor experience and enhance biodiversity
- Create a new play area for children
- Modernise and improve the existing café in the stable block
- Create an additional 17 jobs, including 5 apprenticeships which will be advertised to local people every year.



KEY BENEFITS

1. Restoring Marble Hill House and securing its long-term financial sustainability

This application comprises a package of proposals for the comprehensive repair, restoration and long-term maintenance of the Grade I listed Marble Hill House – one of the most significant Palladian mansions in the country – and its Grade II* Registered Park. The reconfigured and refurbished stable block café would help secure the long-term financial sustainability of the estate. The proposals will considerably enhance the character and appearance of the Twickenham Riverside Conservation Area. This meets the aims of Policies 7.8 and 7.9 of the London Plan (2016) and Policies LP1 and LP3 of Richmond's Local Plan (2018).

2. Creating a revitalised cultural destination accessible to all

A free-to-enter, high-quality visitor experience will be created with new interpretation, significantly enhancing Marble Hill's educational, social and community value. The house's opening hours will be more than quadrupled, and a lift will be installed to allow the first floor to be accessible to everyone. This meets the aims of Policies 4.1, 4.5 and 4.6 of the London Plan (2016) and Policy LP43 of Richmond's Local Plan (2018), which promote the conservation and enhancement of the Borough's heritage assets.

A robust transport assessment has been undertaken on the potential trip generation of the house and park. It confirmed that the existing car parking provision at Marble Hill House will be suitable to provide for the additional demand.

3. Improving the sport and recreation facilities

The regrading of sports pitches and the establishment of a long-term management and maintenance plan will improve the sports and informal recreation offer at Marble Hill. This will play an important role in encouraging healthier and more active lifestyles in the local area. It delivers on Policies 3.19 and 3.2 of the London Plan (2016) and Policies LP13, LP30 and LP31 of Richmond's Local Plan (2018) which promote the enhancement of local open spaces for play, sport and recreation, and healthy lifestyles.

4. Restoring elements of the 18th-century landscape and securing the future of the woodlands

Improved management of the trees and woodlands will restore their historic character and support succession. The reinstatement of significant elements of the 18th-century pleasure grounds to the south of the house will restore the historic character of this internationally significant Grade II* registered park. Outdoor furniture will be rationalised and interpretation will be improved, and the views to the Thames will be maintained and enhanced. Officers from Historic England and the Gardens Trust have reviewed the landscape proposals and strongly support the application in accordance with historic and landscape conservation policy.

The park's tree stock is in severe decline, and the proposals seek to address that by actively managing the woodland, planting new tree stock and enhancing biodiversity. The woodland succession planning is informed by balancing biosecurity requirements, climate change adaptation and historic garden restoration best practice.

5. Improving the natural habitats across the park

The landscape proposals incorporate a range of habitat improvements. Tall grassland areas will be expanded and new trees will be planted up to the park boundaries. Diverse woodland habitats will be reintroduced in the form of shrub understorey and ground flora within the Woodland Quarters. Historic tree structures within the Pleasure Grounds will be reinstated.

A total of 342 new trees are proposed across the site. These will be carefully selected and planted to ensure that they flourish. The number of new trees that will be planted is 20% higher than the number of (generally poor quality) trees that will be removed. The proposals will make a positive contribution to the wider green and blue infrastructure network, protecting and enhancing the Borough's biodiversity. The proposals represent an investment into an important open space within the Arcadian Thames landscape, and also provide for long term enhancement to the park's woodland and ecology. This is in accordance with Policies 7.19 and 7.21 of the London Plan (2016) and Policies LP12, LP15 and LP18 of Richmond's Local Plan (2018).

WORKING WITH OTHER LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

We believe that there is now a general consensus among the community on how best to revive Marble Hill House and Park.

Our plans are supported by The Marble Hill Society, Marble Hill Play Centres, the Environment Trust and the London Parks and Gardens Trust, among other organisations. Many local residents have written to the Council in support of the revised proposals.

We have consulted the Heritage Lottery Fund, who will be funding a large part of the proposed improvements, and they are supportive of the revised proposals.



CHANGES MADE FOLLOWING RESIDENTS' FEEDBACK

EXTENSIVE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In February 2018 English Heritage decided to withdraw its original planning application and start on a new community consultation programme. Over the next six months we listened carefully to local people, and, as a result, we made significant changes to some of our proposals.

1 THE CAFÉ

The original scheme proposed an extension at the rear of the stable block. We have changed the design to keep the café within the ground floor of the existing building. The new design takes its inspiration from a community proposal submitted during the consultation process, which has been drawn up by a local architect.



THE LANDSCAPE

We have amended the original proposals after listening to local people. We will now:

- Develop more diverse habitats in the Woodland Quarters to encourage a greater range of wildlife
- Thin woodland by removing overcrowded saplings and poor quality trees to provide more light for selected trees and to allow new planting to flourish
- Plant new trees, shrubs and woodland margin perennials
- Undertake the work to the Woodland Quarters over up to six years (rather than three years) to reduce the impact on existing wildlife
- Retain defined deadwood habitats to encourage mini-beasts and the whole food chain
- Maintain the Woodland Quarters as dog-free to reduce disturbance to wildlife
- Restore the small nine-pin bowling alley
- Restore the main avenue of trees between the house and the Thames, but spacing the trees to preserve the east-west views which are important to local people.

2 PLAY AREA

As a result of the consultation we will retain the existing grassed baby area and create an additional low-level, ecology-themed play area next to the existing grassed area for toddlers. We will also create an ecology-themed play trail around the perimeter of the park.



WHAT RESIDENTS SAY

'Strongly support. Proposal has already made major changes to previous in order to meet objections and now needs support to prevent terminal decay to structure of house. Gardens need to be managed and I believe that the plan proposed will achieve a good result.'

Resident, Richmond Road, Twickenham

'I strongly support English Heritage's revised planning application for the development of Marble Hill. While some of the criticism of the original proposals was, in my view, grossly exaggerated, I am glad that EH has taken the time to address some of the more reasonable objections. I think that the new proposals are attractive and appropriate, and I am particularly pleased that they include the establishment of gardens which will re-connect the house with its surroundings.'

Resident, Haggard Road, Twickenham

'As a very close neighbour of Marble Hill (and regular user of the Park and visitor to the House), I strongly support this application. English Heritage have made significant changes to their earlier application to meet the concerns of local people e.g. in relation to the scale of the café and I believe the application should be approved.'

Resident, Richmond Road, Twickenham

'As a resident, living within 50 yards from Marble Hill Park, I have taken an interest in the evolution of the proposals for landscape and building refurbishments and wish to confirm that the current application has taken account of concerns by many local residents and represents a balanced solution to necessary improvements.'

Resident, Gibson Mews, Twickenham



'The alterations to the original plan seem to be extremely sympathetic to people's concerns. I applaud English Heritage's commitment to both restoring the fabric and increasing access to the house. The park has been an ever-changing dynamic since Henrietta Howard's day and the new plans are respectful of the past and present, while revitalising its future appeal.'

Resident, Cornwall Road, Twickenham

'I am a local resident and I think the plans look wonderful, a real asset to the local area and great to bring the historic house back to its former glory. I am a One O'Clock Club user so visit the park regularly, I believe the improvements will support the play centres by providing a nicer environment and raise awareness of the charity's good works. I strongly support the application and believe the changes that have been made respond well to previous concerns.'

Resident, Artichoke Walk, Twickenham

'This planning application presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to restore the house and its gardens to the state in which they were in the mid-18th century when Henrietta Howard was living there. Together with the improvements to the café and other public facilities, the restoration of the house and the re-creation of the garden will enhance Twickenham's position as home to some of the most important houses and gardens of fashionable 18th-century society and will be admired by historians, gardeners and, of course, by local people.'

Resident, Spencer Road, Twickenham



HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND

Marble Hill Revived has been awarded a grant of over £4m by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund through the Parks for People Programme.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you have any questions about our proposals, please contact Alex Sydney, English Heritage's Head of Investment and Involvement:

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