

Chartwell Access Statement

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Introduction

1. Chartwell was the family home of Sir Winston Churchill, and is presented to visitors as it was when the family lived there. Chartwell is set on the side of a steep valley, which offers stunning views but has steep slopes and steps to the front of the property. The terraced hillside gardens has steps and sloping lawns down to the lakes. There is the Studio where a collection of Sir Winston Churchill paintings are kept, the kitchen garden where the brick playhouse was built for his youngest daughter Mary. Chartwell sits in 82 acres of land, some formal gardens and the wider estate including woodland walks and a natural play area for children.
2. Mobile signal is generally weak across most of the site, Vodafone and EE offering the best reception. There is a Duty Manager everyday to deal with any emergency incidents and to radio other staff for assistance. Staff have access to radio's in the house, visitor reception, shop, café and the garden team.
3. Assistance dogs are welcome throughout the property, all dog walkers are welcome in the grounds only, we advise to keep dogs on short leads. There is a water bowl outside the visitor reception, café, the house and studio. The bowls are filled in the morning and can be refilled on request.
4. Entry to the house is by timed ticket which is available at the visitor welcome centre, this regulates the footfall and helps with the conservation of the house and the collection. Light levels inside the house are kept low to help maintain the collection. All large bags are to be carried in front of the body so that they do not brush against walls, books or knock any of the items on display.

Arrival & Parking Facilities

1. There are brown signs on motorway M25, and local A roads A21, A22 and A25. The local areas such as Westerham, Edenbridge and Four Elms have brown signs leading to Chartwell. The entrance to the main car park is signed coming from either direction of Mapleton Road. There is a one way steep windy tarmac road down to where the car park splits into two lanes. There are speed ramps on the flat car park lanes.
2. We have 6 designated disabled visitor car parking bays on the top lane, and 12 in middle lanes of the car park, these are clearly marked and are towards the end of each lane, disabled parking bays have a hard tarmac surface and the lanes are marked by white lines the bays are 3.7 metres wide and 4 metres long. If the visitor is going to the café and shop only we would advise that the top lane disabled parking bays are used as this offers a level tarmac surface to the café. Depending on the parking bay used the furthest distance to walk is 40 metres to the café and 50 metres to the shop. In the middle lane from the furthest disabled car parking bay it is a 50 metre walk past the mobility bus to the end of the lane. In front is flat hard surface lane which cars and coaches use towards the coach park and to exit. There is a hard flat pavement with benches on the right and steps up to the terrace, shop and café area. If you turn to the left and go straight to the visitor welcome centre it is 10 metres down and 1 in 5 gradient. The bottom lane does not have



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any disabled parking bays and offers a short walk on tarmac to the visitor centre up to 10 metres from the closest parking bay.

3. The main car part is mostly hard tarmac embedded gravel surfaces, with some parking areas being gravel, on the banks and areas in the overflow car park it is a re-inforced plastic surface where the grass grows through, these areas are slippery in the wet weather. The parking bays are marked out with chestnut spacers.
4. Where the mobility bus is parked there is a bench that visitors can sit on to wait for the bus. The mobility bus is volunteer driven and has a tail lift that can take a visitor in a wheelchair of a maximum weight of 300kg. There are 2 steps up onto the minibus and 10 seats with seatbelts. Up to two folded wheelchairs can be stored on the mobility bus for use by visitors when they get off the mobility bus.
5. The mobility bus goes from the car park, through the coach park, left at the exit onto Mapleton Road and through large wooden gates to the drive at the front of the house. The mobility bus runs every 15 minutes or adhoc depending on the number of visitors. The driver has a radio and can be contacted by staff at the entrance of the house and at the visitor centre if there are visitors waiting to use the bus.
6. If the mobility bus is not running, or the disabled parking bays are full the visitor welcome centre can arrange with the house staff that visitors can drive to the front of the house as a drop off point.
7. The first overflow is through a gate to a grass area with parking spaces marked out, the second overflow is through a further gate and is grass. If the weather has been wet and rainy for a considerable time (over a few days) we do not open the overflow car parks unless we can be sure that it is a firm enough surface to park on. The overflow car parks depending where you are parked can be up to a quarter of a mile walk to the visitor centre.
8. The car park is Pay and Display for paying visitors (National Trust members are free), there are two ticket pay units, the ticket pay unit on the middle lane is on level ground and is accessible.
9. The distance from the car park to the house is a quarter of a mile depending on where you are parked.

WCs

1. The accessible toilet is adjacent to the visitor centre and is 1600mm by 2600mm in size. There is a fixed hand rail on the left hand side of the toilet and a pull down rail on the right hand side of the toilet. The toilet is lit by fluorescent lighting has an automatic hand dryer and an emergency alarm. The door opens outwards and is 970mm wide.
2. There is an accessible toilet on the first floor of the café, access by a lift which has a safe working load of 400kg. The toilet is 1530mm by 2200mm in size, there are rails to the left (fixed) and right (drop down) of the toilet, an automatic dryer and an emergency alarm. The door opens outwards and is 970mm wide.
3. There are no adult changing facilities but there is a baby changing area next to the accessible toilet at the visitor reception, this room does not have a separate toilet, is lit by fluorescent lighting, the door opens outwards and the width is 708mm.
4. We have separate men's and ladies toilets which are situated behind the shop, there are no accessible toilets in this area.

Visitor Reception

1. The visitor reception is a wooden building with lots of windows for natural light and a stone floor, the membership area is carpeted. There are halogen lights, it is not sound proof and can be noisy at busy times.
2. The visitor centre has a flat step free concrete area out side, with a low wooden shelf containing leaflets for walks and dog poo bags. Entrance is two narrow doors that can both be opened for wheelchair and buggy access. Each single door is 600mm offering a 1200mm width when both are opened. The doors are kept open in the warmer weather.
3. The entrance and exit doors open manually inwards and are secured by hooking back. If the doors are closed staff are available to open the doors and assist disabled visitors.
4. The reception desk is 900mm high and has a lower area 750mm high. There is a separate membership area with tables and chairs with armrests. There is space for a 1500mm diameter turning circle .
5. There is an induction loop at the reception desk.
6. There are 4 manual wheelchairs which are loaned on a first come first served basis.

House

1. It is a quarter of a mile from the visitor reception to the house. There are hard paths leading to the house with seated benches along the way. There are steep slopes (gradient of 1 in 3) and two sets of twelve shallow steps with a metal hand rail on the left hand side. The path from the steps to the house is paving stones and one step down to the drive in front of the house.
2. The area outside the house is a large open flat gravelled tarmac surface, there is a grass sloped area (gradient 1 in 3) up to some seated benches.
3. Entrance to the house is by ramp or by two steps, the front door is manually opened and the doors open inwards, the doors are kept open for visitors from 11am to 4.15pm.
4. There are volunteers on the front door to assist disabled visitors, there is a telephone that the visitor reception staff use to contact the volunteers and vice versa, this is used when car drop off is in action. There is a right turn into the sitting room where the virtual tour is situated, the virtual tour includes information and pictures of all the showrooms due to limited accessibility to the upstairs and downstairs, this accommodates up to two wheelchair users.
5. There is wheelchair access into the sitting room, the front door volunteers monitor the number of visitors in this room as it can become quite cramped on very busy days.
6. From the sitting room there is access to a small hall with wooden flooring, access to the drawing room is on the right followed quickly by a left turn, it is too narrow (less than 900mm width) to do a full turn in a wheelchair. In the hall there are double French glass and wooden doors that can be opened as an alternative way into the drawing room. There is a side table to the right which does narrow the entry.
7. From the hallway on the left is a narrow doorway (less than 900mm in width) to the Library, it would be difficult to do a full 1500mm turn, and it would be against the flow of visitors which could be uncomfortable for the wheelchair user. There are three steps up to the hall.
8. Due to the nature of the building and the extensions to it, there are steps to overcome on the ground floor. There is a main staircase with banister on the right up to the first floor;



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the stairs are wooden with no floor covering. There is a wheelchair on the first floor and a seating area in the museum.

9. We have a volunteer in each room.
10. There are no toilets or accessible toilets in the house.
11. Guided tours are by volunteers for groups of fifteen plus on Mondays only and are pre booked. We do have handling items for visitors that are partially sighted. Braille guides can be requested. although these are currently under review with the plan to update in the coming months.. We have A3 printed house guides that are given out at the entrance, and large print guides.
12. There is limited accessibility due to narrow doorways and steps on the ground floor with access to 3 showrooms. Due to narrow doorways and sharp turns the house is not suitable for motorised wheelchairs, but manual wheelchairs can be borrowed at the visitor centre.

Catering

1. There is ramped and stepped access to the café, from the top parking lane depending on where you have parked it is up to a 50 metre walk it is a hard flat surface. Take the route in front of the café to ramped access by the side entrance. You can also take the covered area walk to double doors, which are manual and would need to be opened by staff, each door is 730mm wide.
2. The counters are 940mm high, there are no lower counters, the self service area of cakes is accessible.
3. Staff will assist disabled visitors and wheelchair users.
4. The entrance to the café is a large open area, with queuing to the right hand side, trays are provided for self service food and bottled drinks. Hot beverages are served at the till area. A wheelchair would be able to undertake a full 1500mm turn in this area, there is seating in the café area the height of the tables are 740mm high the chairs do not have arms, wheelchair users would be able to sit at some of the outer tables.
5. Access to the Lady Soames area through a passage way and two sets of double doors where there are extra tables and chairs, the chairs do not have arms, the height of the tables are 770mm in this area.
6. In the passage way between the self service are and the Lady Soames room (both areas have double doors the entrance to the passage way the doors are open on busy days) is where the lift is situated to take disabled visitors to the first floor where the accessible toilet is located. A member of staff will assist in the operation of the lift.
7. There is an outside terrace area, with a wooden decking floor, the tables are 735mm high the chairs do not have arms; the decking area can be slippery in wet weather.
8. The till points have induction loops.

Retail

1. The shop is situated next to the café, and would be up to 55 meters walk from the top lane disabled parking bays. Take the route past the café and continue past the outside seating area, this area can be crowded on busy days there is not always a clear pathway as visitors often move chairs about. Staff do put the chairs back and slot them under tables on a regular basis as they clear the tables. There are a mixture of chairs with and without arms, the height of tables are 750mm.
2. The shop is a large open area with plenty of space to do 1200 turn between displays.
3. The till points have hearing loops.

4. The counter is 925 mm high with a lower shelf of 760mm high. Staff will assist in reaching down items to view.
5. Staff will assist with telling visitors the prices of items.

Garden

1. There is a welcome map which is given out by the visitor centre staff, showing the hard paths to the house. The visitor centre staff can explain the access difficulties and point out where the steps are. There is not a flat step free entrance to the house, the hard paths are steep in areas with up to a 1 in 3 gradient. The 24 shallow steps up to the house have a handrail on the left hand side. On the walk up to the house there are open water areas on the right hand side, which are large ponds. The grass areas slope down to the lakes and are a 1 in 4 gradient, the lakes are open and not fenced off. We do have signs warning about our grumpy swans and not to feed them. It would be very difficult to push a wheelchair across the grass areas as they would be at a slant and could easily topple to one side or if pushed down the grass slope, topple forward. The hard paths are a gravelled tarmac surface; the steps up to the house are paving stones. The terraced garden to the back of the house has an accessible entry which takes you through the Marlborough Pavilion to the flat grassed area. There is a path which is a concrete paving stones around the edge of the grass close to the house. The formal rose garden area is only accessible by steps.

Studio

1. From the visitor centre to the Studio it is a half a mile walk. It is 50 meters from the Marlborough Pavilion past the back of the house to the Studio sign.
2. From the terraced at the far end past the house there is a sign to the Studio which takes you down down a hard tarmacked path (1 in 4 gradient) through the orchard this is a 50 meter walk. At the bottom of the path turn left and go past the cottages on your right. This is a flat concrete paved area, there is a seating bench and there are two steps down to the front of the Studio. You can go across the grass which is a slight gradient and come to the front of the Studio from opposite the steps. The doorway to the Studio is 900mm wide, there is a lip 75mm over into the lobby area and another door into the Studio. There is space for a 1500mm turn in the studio as you exit through the entrance. The Studio can get busy and crowded in the summer months.

Kitchen Garden

1. From the visitor centre to the Marycot and Golden Rose Avenue it is up to half a mile walk.
2. Take the same route through the orchard towards the Studio but turn right and head towards a brick archway through to the kitchen garden this is a 20 meter walk. This area is flat with concrete paved tiles, if you turn right through the pathways in the garden there is a slight increase gradient up for 70 metres, you will come across 47 flagstone steps that leads to a terrace that overlooks the kitchen garden. The terrace has 3 benches for seating. The middle lane is the Golden Rose Avenue which has bench seating and a concrete tile path up through the rose lined walk. The Marycot which is a brick built playhouse has steps down to the entrance and steps back up to the kitchen garden and is not accessible.

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