

Nymans Access Statement

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Introduction

Described by Country Life magazine in 1932 as 'A crafted work of art and theatre' Nymans was a country retreat for the creative Messel family with views stretching out across the Sussex Weald. From flamboyant summer borders to the peace and tranquillity of ancient woodland, Nymans is a place of experimentation, a stage for nature's seasonal changes. The comfortable yet elegant house, a partial ruin, reflects the personalities and stories of the talented Messel family, from the Countess of Rosse to Oliver Messel and photographer Lord Snowdon.

Points to note

- The garden has mainly level and the majority of our pathways have a gravel surface. There are some steps.
- The woodland and arboretum paths are uneven and seasonally muddy with a number of slopes, some steps and uneven paths. There is also an unfenced lake.
- A welcome map is available at Visitor Reception and staff can recommend wheelchair friendly routes.
- Assistance dogs only are welcome in the garden and arboretum. Dogs are allowed only in the woodland and we request that they are kept on a lead during bird nesting season (March to July). There is a water bowl outside of visitor reception and a dog waste bin can be found just outside the main car park, near the gate to access of the overflow car park.
- Toilets are in the car park and at the café, both locations at the start of the visit.
- There are 5 manual wheelchairs available for loan from Visitor Reception
- There are buggy tours of the garden and the woods. Each buggy runs three tours a day during peak season (March to October) and two tours for the remainder of the year. The tour lasts approximately 1 hour with the driver pausing at a number of locations to share information and photographs. Priority is given to our less mobile visitors but it goes slowly enough that companions can walk alongside and enjoy the tour too.
- Mobile phone reception is generally good across the site however, there are a few areas where the signal is weaker. In areas of the woods the reception can be lost.
- The garden has 2 fountains, one in the rose garden and one in the wall garden. There is a wall trough in the East Courtyard of the house.
- There is a small pond in the arboretum, there is post and rail fencing around it.
- Access to the Messel family rooms is via 3 steps. Alternative access is via ramp at the exit from the house, this is accessed from the Forecourt.
- The light levels in the Messel family rooms of the house are low due to conservation reasons.

- No motorised scooters are permitted in the house, we do have a wheelchair that you can borrow to visit the Messel family rooms.
- The Gallery is in the upstairs of the house, access via an internal staircase with a single handrail. We do not have a lift.
- Induction loops are fitted in Visitor Reception, the shop and the café.

Arrival & Parking Facilities

- Nymans is situated on the southern side of Handcross village and is signposted with brown tourist attraction signs from the A23.
- Our car park is directly inside the entrance gate. The surface is flat and is mainly tarmac with some areas of gravel and grass.
- There are 10 blue badge spaces in our main car park, 5 are on a firm tarmac surface and 5 are on gravel surface. The furthest space is 35 metres from our visitor reception
- The overflow car park is accessed from the main car park. The surface is grass and slopes gently to one side. This car park is only used in dry weather.



WCs

- There are two unisex accessible toilets, one in the car park (left hand transfer) and one in the tea garden next to the café. A key is not required for access. The toilet door opens outwards. In both of the accessible toilets there is a red pull switch for emergency use to summon staff help with an internal reset button (in case of accidental use).
- The accessible toilet next to the café is 1400mm x 2160mm.
- The accessible toilet in the main car park is 1520mm x 2400 mm.
- There are no adult changing facilities in either of the accessible toilets but baby changing facilities are available in both.
- There is natural light in both toilets and the artificial lights on both are florescent.
- All the toilets have automatic hand driers.



Visitor Reception



- Visitor Reception is a brick built, timber clad building with a tiled floor. There are some acoustic panels in the ceiling.
- The entrance is across a brick blocked area through manually opened double doors, opening inwards. The width of the doorway is 162cm. Staff and volunteers are able to assist with opening the door if required.
- Exit from Visitor Reception is via a single, outward opening door. The opening is 89cm. There is a small concrete ramp outside down to the tea garden. It is a gravel surface in the tea garden.
- The admissions desk is 86cm high. Staff can come round to talk to anyone if more convenient.
- There is an induction loop at the admissions desk.
- There is natural light in visitor reception and this is supplemented by a mix of fluorescent and LED lighting overhead.
- The membership recruitment desks are 77cm high. Chairs (without armrests) are at these desks. There is no induction loop at the membership recruitment desk.
- 5 manual wheelchairs are available for loan and should be requested at Visitor Reception.
- Buggy tours of the garden are available all year round, woods tours are available seasonally. Each buggy runs three tours a day during peak season; the garden buggy runs two tours for the remainder of the year. The tour lasts approximately 1 hour with the driver pausing at a number of locations to share information and photographs. Priority is given to our less mobile visitors but it goes slowly enough that companions can walk alongside and enjoy the tour too. Seats are reserved at Visitor Reception.



House & Gallery

The house is situated in the middle of the garden and is approximately a 15 minute walk from the car park. The majority of paths have a gravel surface. There are a number of benches throughout the garden.

The paths surrounding the house are mainly level and have a gravel surface. The area surrounding the ruins is paved and uneven in places.

On the ground floor of the house there are the Messel Family rooms (open 1 March to 31 October).

The Gallery is on the first floor and can only be accessed via an internal staircase with a single handrail. Due to the nature of the gallery space and the readily changing exhibition programme we do not offer audio tours or have interactive screens available. The gallery is open all year round, however it does close for brief periods for exhibition changeover – further details are on our website.

The entrance to the Messel family rooms is via 3 concrete steps, there is a single handrail on the right hand side. The door width is 70cm

About 200 metres further round the house there is an alternative access for wheelchair users. The path changes to uneven stone paving. The exit door has a ramp which is always present, the door is always manned and is usually open. It may be closed in inclement weather but you can knock on the door for entry. The door width is 94cm.

For all, the exit from the house is into the Forecourt garden, this area has some uneven paving.



The door opens inwards and volunteers can assist with opening the door if required.

The light levels in the Messel family rooms of the house are low due to conserve the collection which contains fragile textiles. The bulbs are LED.

There is hard flooring throughout the Messel family rooms - flag stone, tiled, wooden. The first room you come to and the two rooms that form a corridor through the house have no carpet and have hangings that are displayed some distance from each other so would not really absorb sound.

The narrowest part of the house is the dining room corridor which is 71cm wide.

A seat is available for visitors in each room.

There are room stewards throughout the family rooms who can assist.

Access to the Library is via a wooden step preceded by a high threshold. Wheelchairs cannot access this room. Volunteers have photographs and digital photos to share with visitors if access is difficult.

Powered wheelchairs will be able to access all but one room on the ground floor. Powered mobility vehicles are not able to access the Messel family rooms but we have a wheelchair that visitors can transfer to.

There are no toilets at the house.

The ruins are generally closed to visitors. On occasions we are able to open them to visitors, access is via a flight of stone steps and once inside the ruins the surface is uneven.

Catering

Our café is located 15 metres from visitor reception. It is self-service, staff are available to assist.



Entry to the café is gained via an automatic sliding door, the opening is 1230mm wide. There is a raised threshold of 50mm

Entry to the glass café extension is via a single glazed door that opens out wards. The opening is 850mm wide and can be opened up to 1650mm wide.

The café and its extension have glass outer walls so there is a good level of natural light. Artificial lighting is provided by florescent and LED lighting.

There is a hard floor surface throughout.

The tables are either circular or square with a metal base and wooden tops which are 790mm high. The chairs are wooden and some have arms.

The majority of tables have a circulation space of 1200mm apart from tables around the perimeters.

The counter height is 900mm. Staff will assist visitors as required.

There is an induction loop at the till point.

Large handled cutlery, double handled mugs and straws are available on request.

The tea garden is situated outside of the café and the paths are mainly level with a gravel surface. There are wooden tables and chairs and picnic tables in the tea garden. The picnic tables have space for a wheelchair.

Retail

The paths around plant sales and the exterior of the shop are generally level with a gravel surface.



The entrance to the shop is via double doors that open outwards. The width of the doorway is 600mm but can be opened to 1230mm. Staff and volunteers are able to assist with opening the door if required.

The circulation space between display stands in the shop ranges between 900mm and 1200mm.

Staff will assist reaching down items to view if they cannot be reached by customers.

The lighting in the shop is a combination of halogen spotlight bulbs in the main shop with fluorescent strip bulbs in the display bays.

We do not have a large print version of the price list, staff can assist with telling customers the price of items.

The merchandise in the plant sales area is displayed on benches ranging between 440mm and 770mm in height. Staff and volunteers are available to assist if required.

There are two till points in the shop, one has an induction loop.

The height of the till point ranges between 940mm and 760mm. Staff will come round to the front of the till point to assist as required.

We offer a carry to car service on request.

Garden

A free welcome map can be gained from Visitor Reception on arrival. Staff can assist with wheelchair friendly routes and answer questions about access.

The paths throughout the garden are mainly level and have a gravel surface. There are some steps in the garden, the steps do not have handrails.



There are a number of wooden benches located throughout the garden.

The garden has 2 fountains, one in the rose garden and one in the wall garden. There is a wall trough in the East Courtyard of the house.

Assistance dogs only are welcome in the garden and arboretum.

The Arboretum is accessed through a wooden gate.



The Arboretum is on a steep slope, it is grassed and uneven. It is seasonally muddy. There is a small pond with post and rail fencing around. There is no seating in the Arboretum.

Woods

The woods are seasonally muddy with some steep slopes, steps and uneven paths. There is an unfenced lake.

A basic map is available from visitor reception and the welcome hub. A more comprehensive map is available for purchase from visitor reception and the shop.

Contact details for more information

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