

## **Access Statement for Amersham Museum**

### **1. Introduction**

Amersham Museum is a local history museum located in the medieval market town of Amersham, north-west of London. The museum is housed in part of a 15<sup>th</sup> century hall house and a 19<sup>th</sup> century building with a new extension which includes seven public rooms and a herb garden. The museum displays a social history collection, which includes photographs, documents, objects and oral histories.

The museum has a regular programme of events, for families and for adult visitors. There are also regular talks and walks. The museum has two websites, [www.amershammuseum.org](http://www.amershammuseum.org) and [www.amershamhistory.info](http://www.amershamhistory.info)

### **2. Amersham Museum's Commitment to Access**

2.1 Amersham Museum recognises that different users have different needs and is committed to providing access to all visitors. The museum works to identify and remove barriers that might prevent fair and equal access to the museum's collections, as far as is practicable and within budgetary, legal and planning constraints.

2.2 The museum has identified the following areas where barriers to access might exist:

#### **2.2.1 Physical Access to the Museum's Collections**

The museum is committed to improving physical access to the museum's collections. The expansion programme into 51 High Street has resulted in improvements to the access to the 15<sup>th</sup> century building. The new glass reception reveals the building to the High Street and the increased space has resulted in a redisplay where more of the historic building is visible to visitors. Redesigning the patio area has enabled wheelchair access to the whole garden. The Victorian building has access to the first floor via a platform lift.

The museum now opens more often, thus improving physical access and tackling attitudes that the museum is often closed. The museum's website and the [amershamhistory.info](http://amershamhistory.info) website have made significant steps in improving virtual access to the museum's collections since 2013.

#### **2.2.2 Emotional and Attitudinal Access**

The museum welcomes all people to the museum and works to create a friendly and welcoming environment. There is an ongoing programme of outreach work – temporary exhibitions, sessions in schools and care homes – to improve the profile of the museum to current and new users.

### **2.2.3 Financial Access**

The museum regularly reviews the admission fees and the cost of talks, walks and programming. Prices have remained low with many school visits delivered free of charge. Temporary outreach exhibitions are free. Admission to children is free to ensure affordability. The Friends of the Museum membership gives free access to the museum and discounted entry to events and the membership fee has only been increased once in recent years.

### **2.2.4 Cultural Access**

The museum understands the importance of making collections relevant and accessible to people from all different cultural backgrounds. Interpretation is delivered in a variety of ways, so text in English is not the only way to access information and is planned to ensure that prior knowledge is not a prerequisite for understanding and enjoyment.

### **2.2.5 Sensory Access**

The museum recognises the benefits of a multisensory experience, particularly for those with disabilities. The museum has developed more multisensory interpretation in recent years, with many more opportunities to touch introduced, particularly with the Tudor resources. The garden is also a multisensory experience and plants have been used for a range of hands-on activities in recent years.

### **2.2.6 Intellectual Access**

The museum is committed to ensuring that visitors feel comfortable and confident in the museum environment and do not need any prior knowledge or understand of history to enjoy their visit. Interpretation is delivered in a variety of way to ensure stories and objects can be enjoyed on a range of levels.

## **3 Pre-Arrival**

There is no on-site car parking. There is a designated disabled badge parking space within 25 metres of the building. All parking is on a tarmac surface and the walk from the public parking including the disabled parking space outside the museum is well lit. People can be dropped outside the museum but this is on the road because there are often parked cars directly outside the museum. There are dropped kerbs nearby on the road.

There is a regular bus service. Catch a number 1, 55 or 353 from the station. It is approximately an 11 minute journey and a bus runs around every 15 minutes. Alight at stop

G on Whielden Street, around 50 metres from the museum. To return to the station go to stop C at the end of Whielden Street.

The nearest train station is Amersham, approximately one mile away. Taxis are available from Amersham station. An accessible taxi service is provided by: Linfields (of Little Chalfont), 01494 766228.

Many of the pavements close to the museum have cobbles and are uneven in places.

Mobility aids – including wheelchairs, walking sticks and frames – can be borrowed from the British Red Cross, Amersham Hospital, Entrance 2, Whielden Street, Amersham, HP7 0JD. 01494 729581.

There is further information about visiting the museum on the website, [www.amershammuseum.org](http://www.amershammuseum.org). The pages of the website can be enlarged. The events leaflet is available as a pdf on the website and the font on this can be enlarged.

#### **4 Arrival**

The route to the main entrance is clearly signed and the route is suitable for wheelchair users. The sliding glass front door opens automatically when museum is open. The door furniture is at a reasonable height and the entry intercom is 1070mm from ground level. The doorway has a clear opening width in excess of 1m.

Inside the main entrance there is a step 180cm wide with a drop of 15cm. The nosing of this step is contrasted in yellow. There is a handrail to the right.

#### **5 Main Entrance, Reception and Ticketing Area**

Visitors enter the museum into a well lit reception area. The reception desk is at wheelchair height with a portable hearing loop. There is seating just inside the first room of the museum beyond the reception area. There is space big enough for a wheelchair user to wait. There is a small shop area in the reception. Some of the books displayed may be out of reach for a person in a wheelchair. Reception stewards are on hand to help where needed.

Carers accompanying cared for people are offered a complimentary ticket and assistance dogs are also welcome.

#### **6 Main Museum Area**

There are no further steps on the ground floor and all of the ground floor is wheelchair accessible. Most of the floor is covering in ceramic tiles and vinyl. There is also a glass panel on the floor, covering the medieval hearth. All the ground floor is well lit with ceiling spot lights.

There is no lift to the 15<sup>th</sup> century first floor. The staircase here is partially suitable for ambulant disabled people; each step has a rise of 17cm with a width of 25cm. The nosing of each step is not colour contrasted. There are ten steps in the flight with no intermediate landings. There is a handrail on one side. The handrail does not extend 30cm past the top and bottom steps. There is an album containing photographs of all the exhibits on display on the first floor. This is available on request from the reception desk. There is a wooden floor upstairs, which is even but slightly sloping.

There is a platform lift to the first floor of the 19<sup>th</sup> century building with emergency intercom and manual handling in case of breakdown. The staircase here is partially suitable for ambulant disabled people; each step has a colour contrasted strip. There are 17 steps in the flight with a bend but no intermediate landing. There is a hand rail on one side for the first eight steps and on both sides for the remaining nine steps to the top. The handrails do not extend 30cm past the top and bottom steps.

All the internal doors have a clear opening width of 90cm and the door furniture is all at a reasonable height (although the internal doors are all open when the museum is open).

There is seating for visitors in every room of the museum.

## **7 Displays and Interpretation**

The museum's displays are mostly contained inside display cases. The first gallery space contains a timeline and series of maps displayed on the walls and on a freestanding display. There are wall-mounted objects in acrylic cases. In the rest of the museum the collection is mostly displayed in display cases. This includes wall-mounted displays and freestanding displays. It is possible to move a wheelchair around all of the ground floor and first displays (although the first floor of the medieval building is only accessible via stairs).

Throughout the museum there are tablets, containing time quizzes and the museum's photographic collection. There are also boxes containing handling items (toys, hats, plates, purses with money) as well as documents and photographs. There is also a table (and pantry) of Tudor food which can be handled, a desk to write up and dressing up clothes. There are graphic panels on some of the walls.

The graphic panels are in relatively large print with some images and illustrations but there are no Braille versions nor provision for any other languages.

## **8 Public Toilets**

There are two public toilets.

One public WC, located in a building just outside the 15<sup>th</sup> C back door of the main museum. There are two steps up to the toilet and there is a hand rail outside the door and a grab rail

inside the toilet. There is no emergency pull cord. The WC is 40.5cm from floor to seat. The lighting is a glass lamp operated by a pull cord. The sink and paper towels can be reached from the WC.

A wheelchair accessible public AWC cubicle is located just inside the 19<sup>th</sup> C back door. There are grab rails around the toilet and an emergency pull cord. The lighting operates automatically when the door is opened. The sink and paper towels can be reached from a wheelchair. This cubical also contains baby changing facilities.

## **9 Garden**

There is a patio area at the back of the museum which leads to a herb garden. The main garden area can be accessed by a gently sloping paved path,, suitable for wheelchairs, or by climbing two steps. There is a paved path the length of the garden, which leads to a Victorian privy and a view of the Misbourne river. The paths are 84.5cm wide and the surface is level. They can be slippery with leaves in the winter, although these are cleared on a regular basis. There are three benches, with arms, on the patio and grass area of the garden.

## **10 Access to Collections**

The museum seeks to open to the public as much as possible with regular openings, a planned programme of booked for events and a regular programme of outreach and touring exhibitions. Appointments can be made to view items in the collection which are not currently on display.

The museum provides virtual access to the collection through the museum website ([amershammuseum.org](http://amershammuseum.org)) and [amershamhistory.info](http://amershamhistory.info).

## **11 Additional Information**

In the event of an emergency all staff and volunteers are trained in evacuation procedures. There is emergency lighting and signage throughout the museum should the lighting fail. Evacuation procedures are not available in large print.

Signage outside the museum includes a green hanging sign with black and white text. There is good lighting around the building.

There are many local accommodation providers in the town. Closest to the museum is the King's Arms <http://www.kings-arms-hotel.com/> and the Crown <http://www.thecrownamersham.com>

## **12 Future Plans**

The museum aims to become more accessible to a wide range of audiences. Currently, the museum is working to review and improve its accessibility through more specific audits with groups representing people with sensory impairments. The outcomes of these audits will inform ongoing developments in the museum.

### **I3 Contact Information**

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