

# Access at The Red House, Aldeburgh

## Introduction

The Red House, the former home of the composer Benjamin Britten and his partner, the tenor Peter Pears, is situated on a private road on the outskirts of Aldeburgh in Suffolk. The site contains an extensive permanent exhibition dedicated to Britten and Pears' life and works along with their home, library, composition studio and the archive building. There is a large garden with a mix of lawns, gravel paths and many flower beds to enjoy. There is also an outdoor tea hut on the croquet lawn.

We look forward to welcoming you at The Red House. If you have any queries or require any assistance in planning your visit, please call 01728 451700 or email [info@brittenpearsarts.org](mailto:info@brittenpearsarts.org).

## Pre-arrival

For full details and maps on how to reach us please visit this page <https://brittenpearsarts.org/visit-us/the-red-house>. This will give you details of how to get to the site if you walk, cycle, drive or take public transport.

## Wheelchair access

The site is wheelchair accessible except for the first floor composition studio and the upstairs of the house.

There are two wheelchairs available: a small lightweight indoor-only wheelchair available for use in the house and a self-propelled wheelchair available for indoor- and outdoor-use. Please talk to the welcome team if you would like to use either. There are also 10 lightweight folding stools available in reception for use across the site.

## Assistant dogs

Assistance dogs are welcome inside. Water bowls can be provided and are available upon request.

## Virtual tour, Audio Guide and listening aids

There is a virtual tour available on our website, along with full details our opening hours, prices and special events throughout the year <https://brittenpearsarts.org/visit-us/the-red-house>.

During your visit, short descriptive films of the composition studio, Peter Pears' study and Britten's bedroom are available to view by request at reception.

Touchscreen audio guides are available in reception and gallery and on-ear headphones are provided. If you would like to use your own headphones please note you will need a jack lead or adapter to fit into the handset. The audio guide also includes descriptive text and videos for the library, house, composition studio and the garden.

There is no induction loop system.

## Handling collection for young children

There are activity trays in the house and they are to encourage children to interact with objects that are similar to what they see in the rooms. Please talk to the room steward if you would like assistance.

## **Conservation**

Conservation is important to us and we ask visitors to take care as they move through the house, library and composition studio and to avoid touching objects. Visitors who are visually impaired or with special educational needs can be given specifically identified objects to handle by pre-arrangement.

## **Customer service and facilities**

There are 10 lockers available in reception where two are larger and accommodate backpacks. Please be aware that there are narrow corridors in the house and you may be asked to store your bag in the lockers or carry it in your hand instead of your back.

Toilets are located in reception and the Archive. Both include one accessible toilet.

Staff and volunteers are available to offer assistance if asked. They can help assist doors, offer audio guides, wheelchairs and folding stools. All staff and volunteers are aware of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower lanyard scheme.

We are very happy to make our information leaflets, maps and other documentation available in large print upon request. We also have digital resources that have been produced for special school visits.

## **Photography and filming guidelines**

People are welcome to take photos and videos for personal, non-commercial use. They must not take photos or film people without permission, must not use flash or tripods and observe signage indicating where photography and filming is not permitted.

## **Entrance and parking**

Golf Lane is a private unmade single track with an uneven surface. This is the only way to enter and exit The Red House.

The main drive (1) and car parking areas are topped with shingle with painted lines to indicate parking spaces. The speed on the main drive is limited to 5mph and there are 13 spaces in car park 1.

There is a second car park (2) with one reserved blue badge parking space and 16 other spaces (3). A bonded gravel path leads from this car park down to Reception in the courtyard (4).



1 Main entrance car park



2 Car park 2 entrance





3 Blue badge parking space in car park 2



4 Level bonded gravel surface from car park 2

The drop-off point for taxis (5) is from the main drive which is connected to a bonded gravel surface. It then leads to a concrete path in the courtyard which leads to Reception (6).

There are two areas for bike storage: one on the side of the garage (7) in the main car park and the courtyard (8).



5 Bonded gravel path in front of The Red House



6 Concrete path from main drive to reception



7 Bike rack at side of the garage



8 Bike rack in the courtyard

Reception is approached via a shallow ramp (9) and is level throughout. On arrival you will be welcomed by the team (10). This is where you buy or collect your admission ticket and start your visit.

To the left of the room is the museum shop (11) and the right is the toilets and lockers (12). There is a fully accessible toilet with two handrails (13) and a horizontal wall mounted baby changing unit (14).



There is limited seating in reception for visitors (15). There is a water fountain available with cups and has a spout to fill a water bottle (16).



9 Ramp to reception



10 Reception entrance with welcome desk



11 Museum shop



12 Entrance to the toilet block and lockers



13 Toilet with handrails and help cord



14 Baby changing unit in accessible toilet



15 limited seating in reception



16 Water fountain in reception

## The Gallery

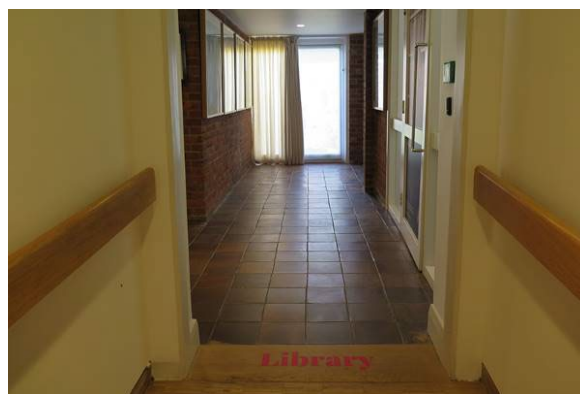
The gallery is accessed from a wide doorway with two doors in reception and follows a one-way route (17). There is timber flooring and metal air vents which are level throughout, and displays are designed to be fully viewable from a wheelchair. The fire doors can be fixed open for access into the gallery.

Please note that light levels are low to protect the collection.

There are two exhibitions within the gallery: the first about Britten's life and works, and another that changes every year. From the second exhibition there is a shallow slope with handrails on both sides that leads to the library (18).



17 Timber flooring and metal air vents in gallery



18 Shallow slope with handrails to the library

## The Library

The library (19) was designed for Britten and Pears in 1964 on the site of an old cow shed, and is level throughout with a tiled floor. Please note that space is restricted within the room because of the layout of furniture and the piano. From here, you can exit into the garden (20) through French doors and a ramp which leads on to a grass lawn.



19 View of library from the entrance



20 Library exit leading into the garden

## The Red House

A former farmhouse, The Red House dates from the 1650s with additions made in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and 1960s. The ground floor is open for viewing and the entrance is through the door on the porch (21). A ramp is available to access the main step from the path (22).



The House is presented as it was in Britten and Pears' time with original carpets and other furnishings (23). The ground floor has a combination of tight corners, slopes, small door frames and narrow corridors (24) that restrict the size of wheelchairs and walking aids that can go in the house. Part of both the dining (25) and breakfast (26) rooms are cordoned off.



21 Entrance to The Red House



22 Ramp to front door of The Red House



23 Entrance hall



24 Corridor with original 1950s carpet



25 Cordoned off dining room



26 Breakfast room with safety signs

You can walk through the entrance hall, house gallery (27) and drawing room (28). The exit is at the drinks room (29) where there is a small step down into the courtyard (30).

The upstairs of the house is open for tours only at 11:15, 11:40, 13:30, 14:30 and 15:30 and please note that times may vary on the day. The rooms and corridors are narrow and winding. Connecting rooms (the twin and big bedrooms) have step access.

If you are unable to join this tour, please ask at Reception to watch the descriptive films.



27 View of the gallery room in the House



28 Drawing room which leads to drinks room exit



29 Drinks room exit



30 Drinks room exit from the courtyard

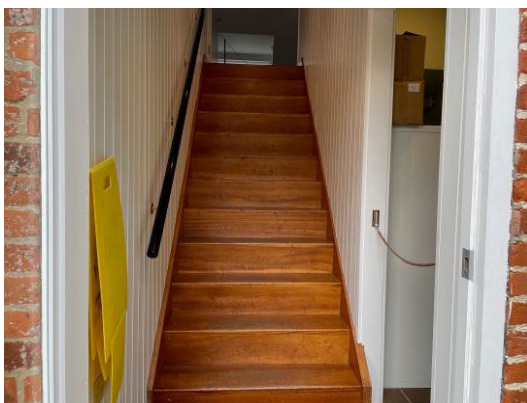
A lightweight, clean wheelchair with a 46cm (18") wide seat is available for visitors who are unsteady on their feet or have a wheelchair that is too wide to get through the front door.

There are room stewards in the entrance and drawing rooms to welcome you and answer any questions you have. If seating is required, please ask them for assistance.

## Composition Studio

The composition studio is accessible by a staircase (31). There are 12 steps and a handrail on the left. In the room, there is an interactive panel (32) with text and photographs about the building of the studio and how Britten used the space to compose. There are 5 extracts of works to listen to plus a recording of Britten talking about this room.

If you cannot access this space, please ask at Reception to watch the descriptive film.



31 Staircase into the composition studio



32 Interactive panel



## The Archive

The Archive is linked to the main site by a level brick path with a gentle slope into the building itself. It is open for talks Thursday to Saturday at 12:15, 14:00 and 15:00. Talks take place in the foyer and seating is available. Talks are included in the admission charge.



33 Archive entrance



34 Archive foyer

## The Garden and Tea Hut

The garden is viewable from various paths around the site. The paths are made of different materials including brick (35), concrete (36) gravel (37) and grass (38). Many of the paths are wide enough for wheelchairs and mobility scooters and the lawns may also be passable in good weather conditions.

Please note that some areas are uneven and gravel and grass in places may require effort to cross and have puddles in wet weather. There are terraces and steps in the garden and where possible handrails have been added. A wheelchair is available upon request from reception.

There are also benches located across the garden.

The audio guide includes a narration of the garden.



35 Brick path that leads to the house & Archive



36 The pond surrounded by concrete paving





37 Gravel path that leads into the croquet lawn



38 Grass tennis lawn

The Tea Hut is located at the end of the croquet lawn. There is a gravel path in front of it which leads to the Archive building and steps up to the tennis and croquet lawns (39). There is a hatch which opens up during visiting hours and is staffed by one person (40). There are bins to the side of the hut (41) and tables and chairs on the lawn nearby (42).



39 Path that leads to the Tea Hut



40 The Tea Hut



41 Bins on the side of the Tea Hut



42 Tables and chairs