

Hever Castle Access Guide

INTRODUCTION

This access guide does not contain personal opinions as to our suitability for those with access needs but aims to accurately describe the facilities and services that we offer all our visitors.

Situated in the heart of the Kent countryside, Hever Castle and Gardens is a Grade 1 listed building and garden, once the childhood home of Anne Boleyn.

At Hever Castle and Gardens, we strive to ensure that all visitors have an enjoyable experience. Visitors with disabilities will be charged at the appropriate individual rate for 'Castle and Gardens' or 'Gardens Only'. Their carer will be admitted free of charge.

If you are unsure that access to the Castle building is suitable for you, we recommend that you purchase a 'Gardens Only' ticket and have a look at the Castle Gatehouse to make your own assessment. Should you decide to visit the Castle you are able to upgrade your ticket at the Castle Entrance.

We look forward to welcoming you.

PRE-ARRIVAL

By Road

- Hever Castle is located 30 miles from Central London. 3 miles south east of Edenbridge, off the B2026, between Sevenoaks and East Grinstead. Exit M25 junctions 5 or 6.
- There are no bus services to Hever Castle.

By Rail

- London Victoria or London Bridge to Edenbridge Town (3 miles from the Castle – taxis available).
- Hever station (no taxis) is a one-mile rural walk to the Castle.
- Eurostar terminal at Ashford is 1¾ hours' drive by road. Ebbsfleet International is a 1 hour drive by road.

By Air

- Gatwick airport is 30 minutes away, Heathrow is one hour. Hever Castle can then be reached by road or rail as above.

By Sea

- Dover is 1½ hours away by road as is the Channel Tunnel at Folkestone.

CAR PARKING AND ARRIVAL

Car parking is plentiful and free. There are two main car parks. Depending on events and visitor numbers throughout the year, one or both will be used.

- The Paddock Car Park and Coach Park are situated on the opposite side of the road to the main ticket office, adjacent to the King Henry VIII Inn. The Paddock car park surface is a mixture of grass and gravel. The Coach Park is tarmac. They are approximately a 120m/131yds walk to the main ticket office.
- Lakeview Car Park is situated down a long driveway through the gate adjacent to the church. The car park is located near to the lake, at the opposite end of the site to the Castle. The section of the car park nearest to the ticket office has a gravel surface, but the majority of the car park surface is grass. From Lakeview ticket office it is approximately a 550m/601yd walk to the Castle.
- Accessible parking for blue badge holders is available near to the Moat Restaurant which is approximately a 230m/251yds walk to the Castle. Please ask for details on arrival.

TICKETING AREAS

- The main ticket office has serving windows between 950mm/38ins and 1000mm/40ins high.
- The main ticket office is approximately a 360m/393yds walk down a gradually sloping hill to the Castle.
- Lakeview ticket office is located near to the lake and is approximately a 550m/601yds walk to the Castle.
- Lakeview ticket offices have serving windows at 1160mm/46ins high.
- There is a pen and paper available at all ticket booths.
- The Information Centre has a serving window at 1020mm/41ins high.

PUBLIC TOILETS

- There are toilets near to the main ticket office with accessible facilities.
- The door to the ladies accessible toilet near to the main ticket office is 960mm/36ins wide and is approached by a ramp. There is 760mm/30ins transfer space to the right of the toilet when facing the toilet. The toilet height is 475mm/19ins. The basin is 755mm/30ins high. There is one vertical and one folding support rail to the right of the toilet and one vertical and one horizontal support rail to the left of the toilet.
- There is a baby change room opposite the Ladies Toilets with folding table and chair.
- The door to the gentlemen's accessible toilet near to the main ticket office is 960mm/36ins wide and is approached by a ramp. There is 900mm/36ins transfer space to the right of the toilet when facing the toilet. The toilet height is 475mm/19ins. The basin is 750mm/30ins high. There is one vertical support rail to the right of the toilet and one vertical and one horizontal support rail to the left of the toilet.
- The Moat Restaurant has accessible facilities. The door to the unisex accessible toilet is 860mm/34ins wide. There is 870mm/35ins transfer space to the right of the toilet when facing the toilet. The toilet is 410mm/17ins high. The basin is 690mm/28ins high. There is one vertical and one folding support rail to the right of the toilet. There is a horizontal support rail to the left of the toilet.
- The Pavilion Restaurant (open seasonally) has accessible facilities. The door to the unisex accessible toilet is 925mm/37ins wide. There is 785mm/31ins transfer space to the right of the toilet when facing the toilet. The toilet is 495mm/20ins high. The basin is 695mm/28ins high. There is one vertical and one horizontal support rail to the left of the toilet. There is one vertical and one folding support rail to the right of the toilet. There is an additional vertical support rail to the left of the basin. This toilet also includes a baby changing facility.
- There is an additional accessible unisex toilet beyond the Lavender Loos to the left of the Courtyard Shop. The door is 830mm/33ins wide. There is 1090mm/43ins transfer space to the left of the toilet when facing the toilet. The toilet is 485mm/20ins high. The basin is 735mm/29ins high. There is one vertical

and one folding support rail to the left of the toilet and one vertical rail and one horizontal support rail to the right of the toilet. This toilet also includes a baby changing facility.

CASTLE

- Visitors should consider access to the Castle according to their individual needs.
- We regret that it is not possible for visitors to use motorised wheelchairs or mobility scooters inside the Courtyard or Castle due to the historic nature of the building and its contents.
- Wheelchairs cannot be taken up staircases inside the Castle for health and safety reasons.
- Pushchairs cannot be taken into the Castle and must be left in the Courtyard for health and safety reasons.
- From the drawbridge there is one step down to the Gatehouse followed by three steps down to the Courtyard. We regret that it is not possible to install a ramp for these steps for health and safety reasons. From the Courtyard there is one step up and down into the Castle's Entrance Hall.



View of Castle Gatehouse as seen from the Courtyard.

- There are three floors to view in the Castle. The ground floor is arranged on one level, and is the only floor suitable for wheelchair use. There are six rooms to view before reaching thirteen spiral steps up to the middle floor. It should be noted that the spiral steps to the middle floor are the only means of reaching the upper floors.
- The middle floor is arranged on various levels, with steps up and down into most of the rooms. There are sixteen steps up to the top floor. The top floor is also arranged on various levels. There are twenty six spiral steps down from the top floor to exit into the Courtyard.
- All staircases in the Castle have a banister rail.
- Inside the Castle the floor surface is wood in most rooms, with some areas being carpeted or covered in carpet matting.
- Lighting inside the Castle is generally bright with LED spotlights, wall sconces, or chandeliers. However, some areas are more dimly lit to aid preservation of the exhibits.
- Interactive Audio guides are available in (English, French, German, Dutch, Chinese and Russian. Children's audio guide in English only). Hearing loops are available to use with audio guides if required. Please ask for further information on arrival to the Castle.
- Visitor Experience Assistants are available if you require further information or assistance.
- Touchscreens detailing Anne Boleyn's Books of Hours are located on the first floor of the Castle.
- A limited number of magnifying glasses and a brief history of the Castle in Braille are available on loan at the Castle Entrance upon request.
- Freestanding information panels in the Castle are all in large text, and are 1000mm/40ins high and printed on Perspex.
- Some rooms have background sounds and music playing representing the period in history.
- Individual seats and window seats are located in some rooms. Please note that some rooms do not have seating available.
- Visitors who do not wish to go upstairs are welcome to wait for their family and friends at the Castle Entrance. There are audio guides available for those who wish to learn more whilst they wait.

CATERING

- The Moat Restaurant (open daily) and Guthrie Pavilion Restaurant (open seasonally) are both situated on the ground floor and have step free level access from the gardens.
- The left entrance double doors to the Moat Restaurant are 1420mm/56ins wide. The right entrance double doors to the Moat Restaurant are 1780mm/71ins wide. The side entrance double doors to the Moat Restaurant are 1420mm/56ins wide. The tables are well spaced apart, with a height from the floor of 745mm/30ins, with a mixture of upright chairs without arms, and leather settees. There is additional seating outside the Moat Restaurant.

- The Moat Restaurant is approximately a 170m/185yd walk to the Castle.
- The entrance double doors to the Pavilion Restaurant are 1360mm/54ins wide. The tables are well spaced apart, with a height from the floor of 745mm/30ins, with a mixture of upright chairs without arms, and banquette seating. There is additional seating outside the Pavilion Restaurant.
- The Pavilion Restaurant is approximately a 400m/437yd walk to the Castle.

SHOPS

- The Hever Shop and the Courtyard Shop are both situated on the ground floor and have step free level access from the gardens.
- There are two sets of double doors to the Hever Shop at 1420mm/56ins wide. The shop is level throughout.
- The Hever Shop is approximately a 170m/185yd walk to the Castle.
- The left entrance door to the Courtyard Shop is 845mm/34ins wide. The right entrance door is 1010mm/40ins wide. This small shop is level throughout.
- The Courtyard Shop is approximately a 400m/437yd walk to the Castle.
- The Miniature Model Houses exhibition is situated on the ground floor in the same building as the Hever Shop and has step free level access.

GARDENS

- Most of the gardens are accessible to wheelchairs and pushchairs as they are mainly on one level and the majority of steps are ramped.
- The paths are loose gravel, tarmac, stone or grass with gradual inclines.
- The Water Maze on Sixteen Acre Island is approximately a 460m/503yd walk to the Castle and is open April - October. The folly in the centre of the Water Maze is accessible to wheelchair users.
- The Lake Walk is approximately a 2166m/2368yd walk on level ground with a mixture of grass and cinder path surfaces. Some areas are uneven underfoot. There are four wooden bridges to cross around the lake.
- The gate to the events field (open seasonally) is approached via Anne Boleyn's Walk: a path with a gradual incline. Once through the gate the jousting arena is positioned at the bottom of a gradual decent across grass. There is limited undercover seating available at an extra cost, offered on a first-come-first-served basis. There is plentiful free seating on the grass in the field surrounding the arena.
- There are several picnic areas on level lawns throughout the gardens.
- There are wooden benches at intervals throughout the gardens.

GARDENS AT TWILIGHT

- Most of the gardens are accessible to wheelchairs and pushchairs as they are mainly on one level and the majority of steps are ramped.
- The paths are loose gravel, tarmac, stone, or grass with gradual inclines.
- The pathways are illuminated in the evening, but care must be taken in low light areas.
- There are a Limited number of wheelchairs available to hire from the Shop opposite the Information Hut for a refundable fee.
- We advise Clothing and Footwear at Twilight appropriate to the time of year.
- We advise you to bring along a torch for the evenings

GROTTO

- The Grotto is accessible however care must be taken on entry & exits as truss and main beams are in place at throughout the Grotto.
- We will not be providing seating in the waiting area.
- The Waiting area will be outside with no side cover, please dress appropriately for winter weather conditions.
- There are no toilets available at the Grotto.
- The Grotto paths are loose gravel.
- Paths are lit by Christmas Trees
- There is Accessible width for a double buggy and wheelchair on the gravel paths through the Grotto experience but please note the pathways are loose gravel which can make this more difficult.
- We regret that it is not possible for visitors to use motorised wheelchairs or mobility scooters inside the Grotto due to lose gravel paths and limited space.
- We do not allow dogs in the Grotto unless Assistance Dogs.
- Emergency Exit signage is displayed, and Fire Extinguishers are available at both Entrance and Exits.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Should you be required to evacuate the buildings on site members of staff will assist you.
- We welcome trained assistance dogs in all facilities, including the Castle. A water bowl is available in the Castle Courtyard, at the Moat Restaurant and Pavilion Restaurant.
- Clear signage is used throughout the attraction using large cream-coloured text on a dark green background.
- We have 2 manual wheelchairs available for hire for a refundable deposit of £25.00 per wheelchair. It is essential to book these prior to a visit (not the same

day). These can be booked by calling the Shop (10am-3pm) on +44 (0)1732 861718 and selecting option 2. For your own safety, we advise wheelchair and mobility scooters keep to the hard surfaced shingle paths. Wheelchairs will be cleaned before reuse.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Address: Hever Castle Hever Nr. Edenbridge Kent TN8 7NG

Telephone: 01732 865224

Email: info@hevercastle.co.uk

Website: www.hevercastle.co.uk

Grid Reference: TQ478452

Hours Of Operation: Seasonal variations. Please see our website or visitor leaflet for more information.

Local Taxis:

Contact Country Hire and Go Taxis, telephone 07723 054863 or Relyon Taxis, telephone 01732 863800. We suggest that you book a taxi in advance for both legs of your journey.

Local Public Transport:

- Hever station (Southeastern Railway): There is no staff help available and no ramp for train access at this rural station. There is step free access coverage. Level access to Platform 2 (to Uckfield). Steps to Platform 1 (to London). There are no wheelchairs available for hire. The nearest station with more facilities is Edenbridge Town.
- Edenbridge Town station (Southeastern Railway): There is staff help available and a ramp for train access. There is step free access to platform 1 (to London) and Ticket Office. There is a subway with steps to platform 2 (to Uckfield). The nearest step- free staffed stations are Tonbridge or Redhill.
- Edenbridge station (Southern Railway): This station is not staffed and there is no ramp for train access. Platform 2 is suitable for wheelchair access. The nearest alternative stations are Tonbridge or Redhill. There is accessible parking.