



ENGLISH HERITAGE

# Caring for Kenwood

Project overview – main house  
December 2011



## Contents

1. Summary of current condition
  - a. Kenwood House
  - b. Kenwood House interiors
2. New audiences
3. Partnership opportunities
4. Exterior works
5. Interior re-presentation
  - a. The Adam sweep
  - b. The South Front Rooms
  - c. The Orangery

## 6. Summary of current condition

### a. Kenwood House

Condition surveys carried out in 2007, 2009 and 2010 highlighted that exterior of Kenwood House is in urgent need of repair. Kenwood passed from the Iveagh Trustees to the London County Council in 1948, and then to the Greater London Council in 1965. During the 1950s and 1960s serious structural defects were remedied with extensive rebuilding of the south front, north front, Adam Stair and upper floors. The roofs were last recovered in the 1950s as part of these works. Unfortunately, the post-war workmanship has not lasted as long as we would normally expect. Kenwood passed to English Heritage in 1986-1989 and the property has been maintained as part of an ongoing maintenance programme. Despite this much of the work of the 1950s has come to the end of its reasonable life (in particular the roof, lead work and guttering) and 60 years on we are facing a major overhaul.

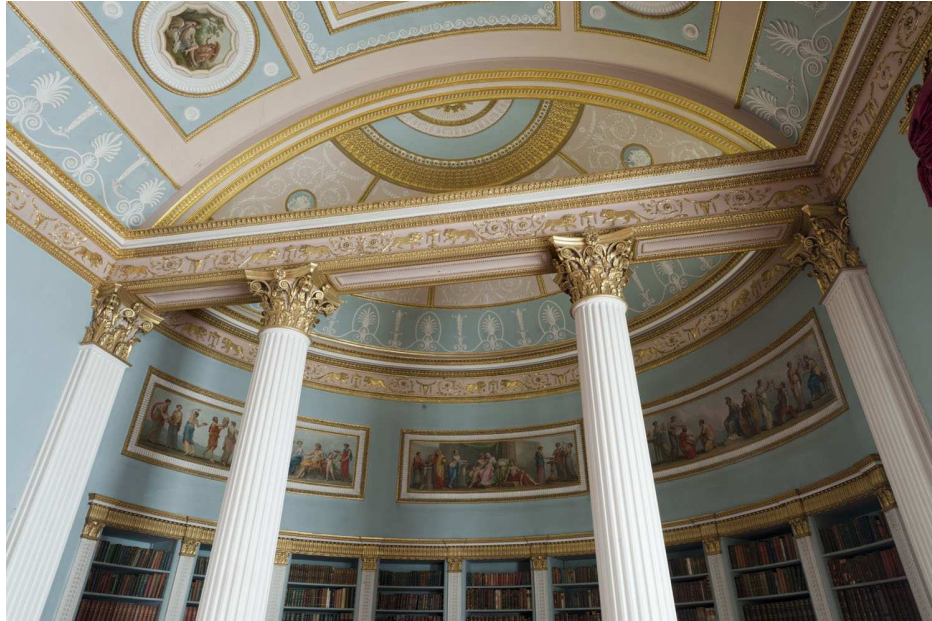


The current state of the roof means that there is a high risk of water leaking into the building and causing damage to the historic fabric, valuable interiors and contents of the building. Due to the condition of the building it has also become difficult to maintain a stable environment in the house, necessary to safeguard the valuable art collection. It is of great importance that the fabric of Kenwood is conserved, both to protect the valuable interiors and collections within the house and so that the house itself is protected for future generations to enjoy.

### b. Kenwood House interiors

Many of the interiors of the house are worn and in need of repair. The disparity that currently exists between the rooms that were re-presented in 2000 and the rest of the house is striking. Not only do many of the interiors look tired, their presentation is at

odds with modern notions of what is appropriate for displaying an art collection in a historic house. Rooms in particular need of attention include the four main rooms designed by Adam (the Entrance Hall, Adam Stair, Ante-Room and Adam Library) and the South Front Rooms (Lord Mansfield's Dressing Room, the Breakfast Room, Lady Mansfield's Dressing Room and the Housekeeper's Room).



Kenwood House currently presents a rather traditional “historic house” face to the public. It has been a private home for most of its history, but is now presented as more of an art gallery. Consultation with potential new users revealed that many people felt they would have difficulty feeling comfortable and confident enough to engage with Kenwood House in its current form. This was especially marked for people who don't traditionally visit historic houses and extreme in the case of the most “difficult to reach” audience.



## 7. New audiences

Caring for Kenwood provides a wonderful opportunity to develop a nationally significant treasure as a heritage resource for local communities. English Heritage is keen to realise the potential of this project to radically transform the levels of learning and participation of existing audiences and to reach out to new audiences, especially those who don't traditionally feel historic houses are for them. We are committed to making some ground-breaking changes both at Kenwood and in going out beyond the walls of the estate. Building on the successful achievements of our HLF funded project at Wrest Park, the Caring for Kenwood project has the potential to act as a catalyst for change. This project will enable English Heritage to develop a transferable model that could represent a new approach for the organisation and influence audience development and engagement in historic properties run by other organisations.

Our experience in the development phase of this project has confirmed the value of a collaborative approach. Through audience consultation we have gained hugely valuable insight into local needs, interest and preconceptions as well as being given exciting new ideas for ways our activities could develop. We are delighted that so many of those consulted have said they want to continue to work with us on delivering Caring for Kenwood, offering to help devise or pilot activities, advise on accessibility of programmes, disseminate information or questions through their networks and take part in projects and programmes as they become available.

## 8. Partnership opportunities

The Kenwood estate lies on the northern edge of Hampstead Heath. Kenwood and Hampstead Heath are managed separately by English Heritage and the City of London Corporation, but there is a great deal of shared history and ecology on both sites.

Local support groups and potential partners agree that there is a need to do more to connect Kenwood with the wider landscape and provide people with a more seamless visitor experience. Consultation with City of London Corporation, RSPB and Heath Hands has established that each organisation uses education, interpretation and volunteers to support its work, but thus far, there has been limited co-ordination between the organisations.

This project provides us with a valuable opportunity to strengthen partnerships with the City of London Corporation, Heath Hands, RSPB and other key partners on Hampstead Heath. This will help develop a more co-ordinated approach to the management of both sites and, we believe, lead to long-term strategic benefits across London. Further consultation has taken place with City of London Corporation, RSPB and Heath Hands to discuss opportunities for joint working.

## 9. Exterior works

An extensive programme of repair and conservation will be undertaken at Kenwood House. The work will include:

- Re-roofing the main house, including renewal of lead gutters and improvements to the rainwater disposal system. The roof is the area in most urgent need of

repair. This work will prevent water leaking into the house and the consequential damage to the building fabric and potential risk to the collection. Other work to update the fire and lightning protection will also reduce risks to the house. Replacing the boiler and building management system will improve environmental conditions within the house, to protect the valuable collections and interiors.

- Repair and re-presentation of external elevations, including render repairs and repairs to the window and door joinery.
- A new decorative scheme for the exterior of the house will be informed by detailed paint research and analysis in order to return the house to a more historically accurate appearance.

#### 10. Interior re-presentation

Caring for Kenwood will provide a step-change in the audiences for Kenwood House and the ways in which those audiences can engage with heritage. This work will enhance the benefits already derived by visitors as well as addressing the reasons why certain types of visitor are under-represented. Underlying this is the responsible care of an important historic building and its collections.

The representation of the interiors of Kenwood House will offer a different approach to the traditional experience of visiting an historic house and will transform the visitor experience. A significant portion of the ground floor of the house will be represented as an 18th-century home with personal artefacts and stories of the lives of the inhabitants for visitors to explore. Rooms will be furnished as domestic spaces with period or period inspired pieces for visitors to use. Multi-layered and multi-sensory interpretation will be developed making the most of both digital technology and low-tech traditional devices such as room sheets.

The rooms will be redecorated and furnished according to two distinct presentation philosophies:

1) The four Adam interiors will be redecorated and furnished according to evidence from historic paint analysis and information from the inventory taken in 1796, in an evocation of the rooms' appearance during the time of the 1st Earl of Mansfield and Robert Adam.

2) The South Front Rooms will continue to be used to display important paintings from the Iveagh Bequest. Because of this, and because the rooms have undergone many changes over the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup>-centuries, they will be decorated in a more generic 18th-century style, and furnished in order to make them more welcoming to visitors. The re-presentation will put Kenwood in a more complete context for visitors, bringing a greater sense of grandeur to the interiors and balancing the interpretation between understanding Kenwood as an historic house and as an art gallery.

Interpretation in the House will focus on the fine art collections, the restored Adam interiors and the social history of the House as a family home. All interpretation will be accessible to a wide range of people following Equalities Act guidelines. The needs of

the identified target audiences will be carefully considered in the development of a multi-layered interpretation. The input from potential users, particularly Disability in Camden, has strongly influenced our interpretation plans.

Eight rooms on the ground floor of Kenwood house will be re-presented and interpreted.

a. The Adam sweep

The Entrance Hall

It is proposed that the entrance hall decorative scheme should be restored to its 1770s design, complemented by Adams furniture and portraits of the first Earl. The aim is to create a welcoming experience. Visitors should feel like guests in private home. The key source of interpretation here will be a member of staff, welcoming guests personally. Staff will introduce the idea that this might not be a usual experience of a historic property and encourage visitors to make themselves comfortable in seating provided throughout the house, and browse the interpretation.

The Adam Stair

There will be a striking new decorative scheme in the Adam Stair area, restoring as far as possible Adams' original intention, will provide a backdrop to establish the idea of guests in the Adams Sweep: both the visitors as welcome guests, and the identities of Lord Mansfield's clients.

The Ante-Chamber

The ante-chamber area is to be restored to its late 18th-century appearance. Here we wish to establish the relationship between Adams and Mansfield. A page from Adam's *Works* on a lectern will be supported by information about his relationship with Mansfield. This is the first time the 18th-century visitors, after a long arduous journey by coach from town, would have glimpsed the view across the park and lake and down to the London skyline beyond. Interpretation will be given on an easel by the window.



## The Adam Library

The Library, as with other rooms in the Adams sweep, is to be restored to its original decorative scheme as far as possible and furnished according to the inventory taken in 1796. This inventory gives an insight into how the spaces were used during the time of the first and second Earls.

As with other spaces in the house, the original appearance must be pieced together through evidence and educated guesses. Here the visitor will be invited to take the role of 'heritage detective' appraising the evidence for changes in the house and gaining an understanding of how it has changed. Mansfield's public face will be explored here; his role as Lord Chief Justice, his ruling in the Somerset Case and his impact on the history of slavery.

Because so much of the furniture was protected under case covers it is proposed to provide covered reproduction seating that allows visitors to sit down and enjoy the space. Quotations printed directly onto the covers will give a hint of some of the conversation that may have taken place in the room.

### b. The South Front Rooms

#### Lord Mansfield's Dressing Room

The Dressing Room marks the beginning of a different phase in the visitor journey, moving out of the Adams sweep and into the Iveagh Bequest. As a condition of his bequest Lord Iveagh wished his pictures to be seen as if they were in the home of an 18th-century gentleman. This room will be furnished with a desk and chairs in the manner of an 18th-century study. Lord Iveagh's portrait will be displayed over the mantel. The room, a prelude to the Iveagh bequest, will introduce the remarkable figure of Lord Iveagh and hang Iveagh's Dutch Masters, in the manner favoured in the 18th century. Furniture will be available for the comfort of the visitors.



Kenwood House – Design for the redecoration of The Earl of Mansfield's Dressing Room to form Lord Iveagh's Room

## The Breakfast Room

This room has changed many times from its original form and its large area provides an opportunity to create a comfortable space for visitors, with a domestic rather than curatorial atmosphere. There will be curtains at the windows, a rug on the floor and furniture that decorates the room and provides for the comfort of the visitors to enjoy the paintings and interpretation, or simply relax and soak up the atmosphere. The hang will display 18th-century British Art, and interpretation will be provided through room sheets on a lectern and marked pages in the Iveagh Bequest catalogue on sofa tables.

## The Study

This room will be painted in a deep red to complement the Turner seascape. The room will also draw together landscapes from the Iveagh collection with works by Gainsborough, Constable and Landseer. Interpretation will be provided in the form of room sheets and a marked catalogue.

## The Housekeepers Room

This room, that has had different uses including as a schoolroom and the Housekeepers room, will be decorated as a neutral domestic interior. A large reproduction of the Zoffany painting of Dido Belle and Elizabeth Lindsay will be hung on the wall. Interpretation here will pick up on the story of Mansfield's role in the abolition of slavery but look at the more personal family stories. A table with drawers will contain information on these themes that visitors can browse and discover.

### c. The Orangery

The Orangery will be used as follows:

- i. Introductory Hub - A model of the House will orient visitors and an AV display will introduce them to some of the main stories of the House, including Lord Mansfield and his family, Lord Iveagh and his collection, the Adam interiors and the Repton landscape.
- ii. Growing Space - The Orangery in Kenwood House will house The Growing Space: an activity base for families, especially those with young children. The Growing Space is an integral part of the visitor route and will provide families with a space in which to playfully investigate themes and ideas connected with Kenwood House and grounds as well as the chance to select equipment to take into the rest of the House to explore together. Activities will be developed in consultation with families but a description of initial ideas based on successful provision elsewhere is provided in Appendix X of the Activity Plan. Key interpretive elements will include:
  - An AV screen where visitors can select some of the content key content from the Smartphone apps.
  - An exhibit on the landscape, including a panel about Repton and the second Earl, a facsimile of pages from Repton's 'red book'.

- A tactile map which will give all visitors an overview of the plan of the house, the phases of development and layout.
- A 'heritage detective' pick up point including a house trail and equipment that visitors can select to take round the house with them including mirrors, torches and binoculars.
- A 'family albums' exhibit that gives visitors the opportunity to contribute their own photographs and memories of Kenwood.
- Activity boxes with a number of activities for families including a dressing up activity, a tea set and a design your own landscape interactive.
- Wi-Fi access and information about downloading the Smartphone apps (we are intending to provide Wi-Fi in all rooms so content can be downloaded as visitors progress through the site).

