



WORLD MONUMENTS FUND BRITAIN

World Monuments Fund was set up as a private organization in 1965 by a group of enthusiasts aware of the dangers that the world's architectural inheritance faced from neglect, the passage of time, war and natural disasters. Its aim was to help rescue and preserve endangered sites around the world. WMF works with local partners and communities to identify and save important heritage through innovative programmes of field conservation, advocacy, grant-making and public education. WMF Britain helps in the UK and around the world as an affiliate of the main fund. Stowe House is our most exciting challenge – and offers a unique opportunity to preserve a work of international architectural significance that is being lost through the passage of time. We hope you will join us in our mission to save one of the most important cultural projects in Britain today.

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STOWE HOUSE PRESERVATION TRUST

The Stowe House Preservation Trust was established in 1997 with the principal aim of restoring and preserving Stowe House for the benefit of the nation and the public. Recognising that the House was in dire need of restoration and that the School had insufficient funds this was an alternative way to help resolve the problem. Its aims are ambitious. However, together with the School, the National Trust and in partnership with the WMF, SHPT will seek to complete the restoration of Stowe as a historic masterpiece for the nation and maintain it for future generations.

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A WORK TO WONDER AT
RESTORING STOWE HOUSE FOR THE NATION

A WORK TO WONDER AT

RESTORING STOWE HOUSE FOR THE NATION



*To build to plant, whatever you intend,
To rear the Column, or the Arch to bend...
Nature shall join you, time shall make it grow
A Work to wonder at, perhaps a STOWE*

Alexander Pope

*From An Epistle to the Right Honourable Richard Earl of Burlington,
Occasion'd by his Publishing Palladio's Designs of the Baths, Arches, Theatres, &c. of Ancient Rome. 1731*

Cover image: Stowe House viewed from the Corinthian Arch
This page: Detail of the frieze in the Marble Saloon sculpted by Charles Peart.





A vision in glowing golden limestone:
the south façade of Stowe House

A PALACE OF CULTURE

Stowe's survival is as miraculous as its architecture

When Alexander Pope wrote of it as 'a work to wonder at' Stowe was being forged into a masterpiece of environmental design. Built between 1680 and 1810, Stowe House sits in 400 acres of landscaped park in Buckinghamshire. It became the principal temple in a collection of over 40 buildings including bridges, grottoes and memorials, most of which still punctuate the landscape.

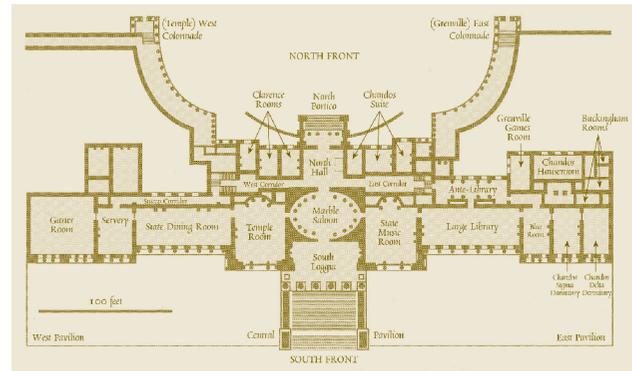
A Georgian palace in glowing golden limestone, the house itself was shaped by the finest talents of the time, amongst them Sir John Vanbrugh, William Kent, Robert Adam, and Sir John Soane.

Stowe quickly became an inspiration for architects and designers all over the world, its influence visible in places as distant as Germany and Russia. Yet the house's survival within its setting is almost as miraculous as its beauty. For two hundred years time, nature and neglect have worn away at the stonework and the fine interiors.

Thankfully, the future of the gardens – themselves containing no fewer than 27 Grade I listed buildings – was assured when, in 1990, they came under the care of the National Trust.

Then, in 1999, the Stowe House Preservation Trust accepted a daunting challenge: the restoration and public opening of the great house itself.

“The mother art is architecture. Without an architecture of our own we have no soul of our own civilization.”



Above: A plan of the State Rooms and the rest of the piano nobile
Facing page: The Marble Saloon was the first of the State Rooms to undergo restoration and was completed in 2005.

World Monuments Fund included Stowe in its 2002 Watch List of Endangered Sites and supported the project by substantially funding the restoration of the focal Marble Saloon through a WMF Robert W. Wilson Challenge grant. But now further help is needed if the 'Stowe Partnership', which encompasses World Monuments Fund and the Stowe House Preservation Trust, is to realise the potential of this exceptional site. We have secured over £7m of our £10.5m target from generous donors and need £3.5m to complete the main project. Through the generosity of an anonymous donor this target amount will be matched 1:1, doubling the value of your donation. Any additional funding raised will enable us to continue with further elements of the interior and exterior work.

FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT



AN EPIC PAST

The extravagant and ostentatious mindset that created Stowe almost destroyed it too

Stowe House is a cultural landmark like no other, its artistic riches the result of a long and glorious era of artistic patronage on the part of its Liberal-minded originators, the Temple-Grenville family, who became the Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos. Following the example of Sir Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham (1675–1749) the Temple-Grenvilles demonstrated both their burgeoning political power and their enlightened commitment to the study and usage of Antiquity. As the first English site to be explained by a guide book, Stowe House and its estate became a Grand Tour in itself. Every temple and each room was infused with a unique take on great art and philosophy, from the North Hall, painted by William Kent, to the dazzling Marble Saloon based on the Pantheon in Rome, and the later Egyptian Hall as Britain's first response to ancient Egyptian architecture, whilst the Gothic Library is Soane's only essay in that style.

This addiction to artistic extravagance caught up with the increasingly eccentric patrons as their fortunes peaked and declined in the nineteenth century. Spiralling debts forced the first Great Sale of contents in 1848. In 1921, during a second Great Sale, Stowe faced the threat of demolition, marketed as a quarry for salvage. It escaped the bulldozers thanks to the foundation of Stowe School.



Top: Viscount Cobham, by Jean Baptiste Van Loo, ca 1740
Above: Founding headmaster, JF Roxburgh meets the first pupils in 1922
Facing page: The Temple Grenvilles laid on a lavish reception for the visit of Queen Victoria in 1848. Stowe survived the fall of the dynasty by becoming a school.

“Architecture, of all the arts, is the one which acts the most slowly, but the most surely, on the soul”

ERNEST DIMNET



A CHALLENGING PRESENT

Despite its enduring grandeur, Stowe's fabric requires urgent, thorough and costly renovation

Stowe looks majestic from a distance and much has been improved but closer inspection reveals the poor state of the stonework which is yet to be restored. Everywhere smooth 'ashlar' masonry had sheared and flaked off. Finely cut cornices and parapets were imperilled: fragments have fallen and extensive scaffolding remains in place for protection whilst the external works are completed. Similar problems still plague the interior, as many of the superb decorative plaster and painted ceilings are dilapidated and peeling.

World Monuments Fund helped Stowe by prioritising funds towards the restoration of Stowe's central and most celebrated space, the Marble Saloon completed in 2005. The extraordinary results showed what committed action can achieve. The coffered dome, a kaleidoscope of individually moulded rosettes, and its exquisite frieze of 280 human figures and 18 animals by Charles Peart, are now in pristine condition, representing one of the great rooms of Europe. The Stowe Partnership began work in 2009 on restoring the elegant library with its magnificent ceiling spanning 750 mahogany book shelves. Even so, a great deal of painstaking, expert and expensive work remains.

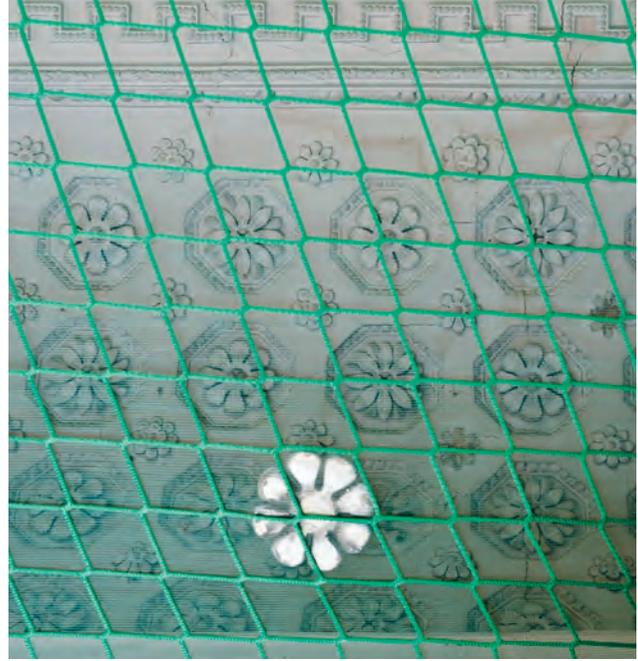
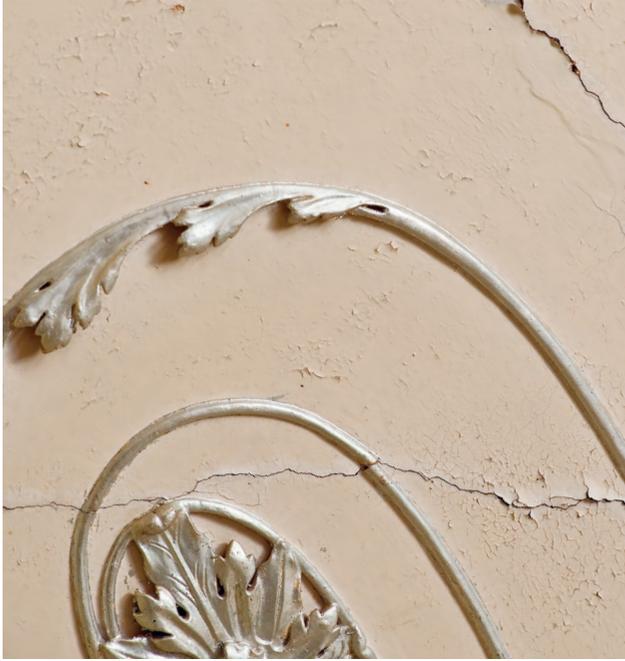


Top: A stripped back column awaiting essential repair.
Above: Deteriorating limestone
Facing page: A conservator applies the finishing touches to the gilded ceiling in the Large Library

“These old buildings do not belong to us only [...] they have belonged to our forefathers and they will belong to our descendants, unless we play them false. We are only the trustees for those that come after us.”

WILLIAM MORRIS





Top left: The neoclassical ceiling in the Temple Room, probably the work on Vincenzo Valdre. It was restored in 1965 but needs urgent attention. Cracks are clearly noticeable.

Top right: Before its restoration in 2010, the magnificent ceiling in the Large Library was covered with a protective netting as chunks of plaster began to fall endangering those using the room below.

Bottom: The State Dining Room ceiling by Joshua Harris. The octagonal painting, attributed to Robert Jones, represents Venus attended by the Graces.



Top left: Before its recent restoration, the deteriorating external plaster revealed the layers of the wall structure.

Top right: The once smooth 'ashlar' masonry, seen here above a Corinthian pilaster, was in a poor state of repair before exterior work commenced in the summer 2009.

Bottom: Flora reclining beside the garter badge atop the eastern pavilion.

AN INSPIRING FUTURE

After its restoration, Stowe House will be open to visitors for 200 days a year

All the painstaking and costly restoration work funded by WMF's appeal will have an important public benefit. Upon completion in 2012, the revived Stowe House will be regularly opened to the public.

International scholars and conservation experts are currently researching the history of the site. A new interpretive centre and an inspiring events schedule mean that its historic spaces will speak again with a new and contemporary relevance. In 2008, 120,000 people visited Stowe Landscape Gardens. This figure is expected to rise to at least 170,000 once the National Trust's major project to refurbish New Inn Farm, the coaching inn that welcomed 18th century travellers to Stowe opens in 2011. Stowe House will be the focus of this restored Arcadian vision and the collaboration between the National Trust and the Stowe Partnership will ensure the seamless integration of gardens and house.

Upon restoration, Stowe House will emerge as a unique historical, aesthetic and educational resource with a strong culture of care. Importantly, as a prime location for occasional hire, it will now be able to earn the funds for its own upkeep. Integral to the project is a plan which will enable visitors of all kinds to enjoy its beauty, understand Stowe's message and recapture its significance in our nation's history.



Above: A detail of a mural by Vincenzo Valdres in the State Music Room

Facing page: It is essential that the future of Stowe is secured so that it can be enjoyed by future generations.

“We hope that you share our vision for Stowe and that visitors will continue to be enraptured and inspired by the spirit of the English Enlightenment and the poetry of the place.”

DR ANTHONY WALLERSTEINER

Headmaster, Stowe School



BE PART OF STOWE'S STORY

Help us to conclude the next chapter in the
great story of Stowe House

Our phased restoration programme has dealt with most of the hard work in replacing failed roofs and repairing damaged masonry. What remains is: the research, conservation and public presentation of the beautiful but distressed principal State Rooms: the Library, North Hall, State Dining Room, Music Room, Egyptian Hall and stair passages. Needs range from commissioning forensic analysis of their decorative history to securing plaster and restoring fine gilt and painted surfaces. Beneath the Marble Saloon lies the space to be fitted out as the visitors' centre where film, loaned historic items and educational materials will enlighten and entertain.

World Monuments Fund and partner donors have secured over £7m of our £10.5m target and need £3.5m to complete the main project. Through the generosity of an anonymous donor this target amount will be matched 1:1, doubling the value of your contribution. Any additional funding raised will enable us to continue with further elements of the interior and exterior work which make up this important project.

Now you are invited to be part of the next chapter in the story of this magnificent building. A donation, however large or small, will help complete the final leg of the journey for Stowe's revival, illuminating a beacon of Britain's cultural heritage.



Above: Stowe's interiors continue to deteriorate whilst awaiting restoration.
Facing page: The South Front seen here cloaked in scaffolding whilst exterior repairs are undertaken.

“The Stowe Partnership aims to achieve an outstanding standard and is committed to the long term maintenance of the house. Having brought it all back into perhaps the best condition it has ever enjoyed at any one time, it will be kept in that state so that future generations can fully understand and appreciate its beauty.”

ANDREW FANE

Chairman, Stowe House Preservation Trust



HOW TO MAKE A DONATION TO STOWE

We warmly welcome support from individuals, foundations and companies. All donors will receive recognition that is commensurate with their level of support and all gifts will be appropriately acknowledged. We are happy to discuss with potential donors their recognition needs or the use of Stowe House as a corporate facility for receptions or other events. Donations can be made in a number of ways, including by cheque made payable to 'World Monuments Britain Ltd', by credit or debit card, in the form of shares, legacies or other tax efficient gifts. Where appropriate we can claim Gift Aid, thereby increasing the value of your donation.

Donations from US taxpayers can receive tax deductions on gifts via WMF in New York as the fund receives full tax-exempt status.

Those wishing to make contributions should complete the form found in the back and return it to World Monuments Fund Britain, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DH, or go to our website www.wmf.org.uk where card donations can be made directly. Further information, such as a more detailed breakdown of costs relating to elements of the restoration project, legacies, tax-efficient means of donating to the project, or to arrange a visit to see Stowe, please contact a World Monuments Fund representative on:

Tel: + 44 (0) 20 7730 5344

Fax: + 44 (0) 20 7730 5355

enquiries@wmf.org.uk.

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