

Staircase House Press Release

MODEL BEHAVIOUR

If you've ever wanted to build a house then Staircase House is offering you the chance with its new 3D model. Visitors can now take apart the medieval town house and piece it back together to see how the house grew over time. The model was commissioned by Stockport Council and made by a specialist craftsman recommended by the Royal National Institute of the Blind.

Sarah Cotton, Curator of Staircase House commented "We already have a computer generated image of the house to show visitors how the house was added onto, but it is not accessible to visitors with visual impairments. The 3D model allows people to get their hands on the house and understand how it was built up from the one storey thatched roof building of the 15th century to the grand house it is today."

Carpenter and craftsperson Loz Simpson has used an innovative technique using raised marquetry to make the model. Like braille, this technique allows blind and partially sighted people to feel the shapes of windows and the timber framework on the building, as well as understanding the style of the building as a whole.

Speaking about the model, Loz commented: "My primary goal was to create a tactile interpretation for the visually impaired. My experience over the past five years showed that tactile interpretations that were initially designed for the visually impaired, were also fascinating to sighted visitors. As a result, the concept of 'Access for all' emerged; the idea that a piece designed for those without sight can be an equally enjoyable experience for those with sight. The Staircase House project embodies this concept."

He continued: "The model represents more than five centuries of development and all of the individual moments where the building changes from one form to another. When it was finished, I took it to the RNIB, where several visually impaired members of staff there were kind enough to 'road test' it for me. Their reaction was overwhelmingly positive."

Councillor Pam King, Stockport Council's Executive Member for Leisure, added: Staircase House is one of our greatest achievements. Ten years of restoration has brought this house to life, making it a truly interactive museum, which everyone can participate in. The 3D model is another string to our bow, helping all visitors to understand how the town's flagship attraction came to stand as we know it today."

The model joins other innovative projects that Staircase House has utilised to ensure that the attraction is accessible to visitors. A British Sign Language video tour was introduced in October 2005, and touch tours are also available.

Staircase House is open 7 days a week.
Mon - Sat 12pm - 5pm, Sun 1pm - 5pm.
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