

The history of Orleans House is a story of change. Over the years it has altered dramatically to meet the needs of politicians, royalty and collectors (to name but a few)! Use this map to reveal their stories and discover how they transformed the site.

1

Eighteenth Century

In 1710, Scottish architect John James (1672–1746) designed and built a large brick house for the retired politician James Johnston (1643–1737) and his wife, Catherine Vere.

Can you find their portraits hanging inside the North Wing?

2

Eighteenth Century

Johnston was a frequent entertainer and loved to host parties. He had the famous architect, James Gibbs (1682–1754), build the Octagon Room c.1720 as the perfect entertaining space. Gibbs studied in Rome and was inspired by the city's classical architecture. This typically included geometric designs and symmetry which is likely why the room is Octagonal. Step inside and enjoy “his little baroque masterpiece”.

Can you spot the ‘Putti’ – the small boyish plaster statues?

3

Eighteenth Century

One of Johnston’s famous guests was Queen Caroline (1683–1737), wife of George II (1683–1760). A menu from when she dined here in 1729 reveals that she brought her own confectioner, chef and even her own gold plates!

Can you find the menu hanging up at the entrance of the Octagon Room? Which of the dishes would you have tried?

4

Eighteenth Century

Johnston was a renowned gardener and had an orangery in the West Wing, where he housed exotic plants such as orange trees and pineapple plants. In the eighteenth century, these fruits were expensive and owning an orangery was a symbol of wealth and status.

5

Eighteenth Century

The North Wing was made up of service rooms designed to help with the running of the Octagon Room. These included a kitchen, wash house and a Housekeepers office. The Housekeeper managed the household and it was here that orders were made and important keys locked away.

6

Nineteenth Century

The Duc d’Aumale, who lived here from 1848–1871, built an impressive library on this spot which, sadly, was destroyed in 1926. However, in 2006 builders found the original stone blocks from the library staircase.

As you stroll through the woodlands look out for them and the interpretation markers. Can you imagine what the library looked like?

8

Nineteenth Century

The nineteenth century Coach House and Stables, now our Education Centre and contemporary art gallery, used to look very different. The Duc d’Aumale would have kept his coaches and horses in the space. It would have been two storeys high with a slanted roof known as a mansard roof.

10

Twentieth Century

In 1926, the main house was purchased by a gravel merchant and sadly demolished. Our neighbour, Nellie Ionides thankfully saved the Octagon Room, West Wing, North Wing and Stables Block. You can find interpretation markers in the grounds showing where the house and library once stood.

9

Twentieth Century

This is a statue of Diana, goddess of the hunt. Her hand is upturned as she is reaching for her now missing bow and arrows.

This is a copy of the *Diane de Gabies* from the Louvre in Paris. The original is an ancient Roman copy of a Greek sculpture. Replicas of statues, such as this one, were very popular in the 1700s. We believe Nellie Ionides purchased the statue between 1930–1950. Over the years our Diana has lost her hand and then had it replaced again!

11

Twenty first Century

Between 2016–2018, the North Wing was restored in a style more sympathetic to the original eighteenth-century design. This was thanks to the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and other generous funders.

7

Nineteenth Century

Carved into the centre of the original Coach House roof was the symbol of the French royal family, the fleur-de-lys (a three petaled flower). The carved block was found years later during some restoration work and can now be seen on the pathway into the courtyard next to the car park.

Can you find it?

Key

Toilets

Car park

Interpretation markers – discover secrets of the former buildings

Pedestrian entrance

Building colour guide

Eighteenth Century

Nineteenth Century

Twentieth Century

Twenty first Century

