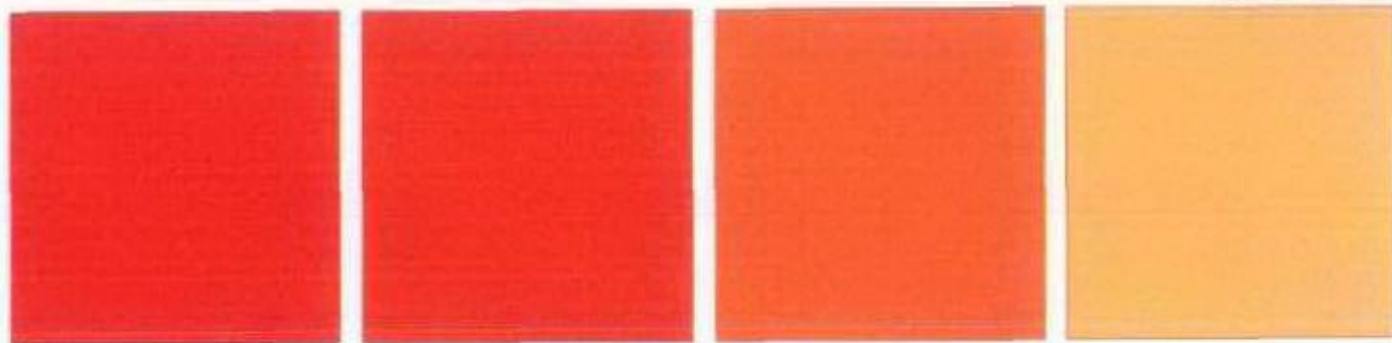


Gray's Inn, 5 Verulam Building, Access Statement
London WC1

March 2010



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22.03.10	AC	4	

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project description

This report supports the proposals for access improvements at No 5 Verulam Building , Gray's Inn in the Borough of Camden.

Access consultants:

David Bonnett Associates (DBA) were appointed in October 2009 to act as Access Consultants for this project.

The DBA team includes:

Dr. David Bonnett RIBA
Adrian Cave OBE, RIBA, NRAC
Tamara Kocan

Surveyors for the scheme are:

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Client

The Honourable Society of Gray's Inn
8 South Square
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1.2 Interpretation of standards

The criteria for access and inclusive design for this project are based on the guidance in approved Document Part M 2004 (ADM) with additional references to BS8300: 2009 and current good practice.

1.3 Drawings examined

This report is based on a review of the drawings prepared by GVA Grimley dated February 2010.

1.4 Purpose of the report

This statement describes the provision for access, including for disabled people at No 5 Verulam Buildings, Gray's Inn. The proposal is to improve access at Verulam Buildings by means of new steps and a step-free route to and from the entrance to No 5. The written description is accompanied by marked-up plans to illustrate the main access features.

2.0 CRITERIA FOR INCLUSIVE DESIGN

2.1 Design standards for accessibility that apply

Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2006

In May 2006, the government introduced changes to the planning applications process. The circular Guidance on changes to the development control system, effective from 10 August 2006, sets out the formal requirements for Design and Access Statements to accompany certain applications. From August 2006 there is a requirement for a Design and Access Statement to be submitted with most types of planning applications.

Building Regulations Part M (2004) & Part B (2002)

AD Building Regulations: Part M and Part B are the only standards relevant to access. It is essential to understand that these standards require Building Control approval. The Regulations make clear that designs other than those shown in the document can be approved if they are justified as being equally or more effective. Approval confers acceptance that the building meets all reasonable standards in respect of physical access for disabled people with regard to the DDA.

British Standard 8300: 2009

Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people. This BS was reviewed and republished in February 2009. As such this Code of Practice is considered good practice. Where practical and reasonable it is recommended that BS 8300 standards are applied to new buildings.

2.2 Interpretation of standards

Access standards are in a continuing state of development with no one authoritative document as a single source of reference. Instead several separately authored documents have to be referred to, inevitably revealing anomalies and contradictions.

Whilst frequently used documents such as Approved Document Part M 2004 and BS8300 "Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people" provide general advice, other guidance, may be more specific.

DBA provide guidance and advice on access - they do not 'approve' and are not authorised to provide confirmation that the design complies with statutory standards. DBA do not warranty any design in respect of the DDA - this relies upon not only the physical building providing satisfactory access, but also how the building occupants manage the building in its day use.

3.0 OVERVIEW

The proposed improvements and alterations will make a considerable improvement to the accessibility of No 5 Verulam Building particularly for disabled people.

At present, no wheelchair users can have access to or from Verulam Buildings without the use of temporary ramps and assistance from other people. Also, each of the double entrance doors is too narrow to allow a wheelchair user to pass without opening both doors. The proposed alterations will provide access via two steps up from the pavement to a new level landing in front of the entrance doors. A new step-free route, constructed over the open basement area, will provide step-free access to the same level landing. A door opening system will enable anyone to open both doors by pressing a pad, after receiving permission from the receptionist to enter the premises.

The proposed works will involve minimal, and reversible, alterations to the existing building fabric and railings.

Although not part of the current Planning Application, the client is investigating the opportunities for providing a Blue Badge car parking space close to Verulam Building in order to improve access and facilities for disabled people.

4.0 ACCESS PROVISIONS

4.1 Objectives

The objectives of the proposed alterations are to enable everyone, including disabled people, to enter and leave No 5 Verulam Buildings independently. Once inside the building, there are step-free routes at the ground floor level internally.

4.2 Introduction

David Bonnett Associates (DBA) were appointed in October 2009 to provide Access Consultancy advice in connection with the proposed improvements. The proposals were reviewed within the context of existing external and internal provisions. DBA have previously provided advice to the same client on other aspects of access and inclusive design at Gray's Inn.

4.3 Current problems

Because there are two steps between the pavement and the entry doors at No 5 Verulam Buildings and because each entry door is too narrow for wheelchair access, many disabled people are unable to enter or leave Verulam Buildings without assistance.

These problems are particularly significant at the present time because a lawyer who is based at Verulam Building is currently a wheelchair user and requires independent access to the premises, often outside normal office hours.

4.4 Design proposals

The main features of the improvement proposals include:

- Raise the external landing at No5 to the same level as the threshold of the entry door.
- Form two steps, each with risers of about 100mm and treads of 250mm, between the pavement and the new level landing
- Form a new step-free route via a slope with a gradient at 1:21, constructed over the external Basement area with level landings at the top and bottom of the slope. The new slope will be constructed with perforated chequer plate to provide step-free and well drained access.
- Because the new slope is at a gradient flatter than 1:20, no handrails will be required.
- Remove a section of the existing railings to form the lower landing at the foot of the ramp. The ramp will have a width not less than 775mm and a landing 1200mm wide as recommended by Approved Document Part M (Table 2, for routes at right angles in existing buildings.)
- Reuse part of the existing railings to form an enclosure at the side of the new lower landing.

During the development of the proposed design the following options were considered:

Option A - A new landing, level with the threshold at the entry doors and sloping down towards the pavement with a gradient at about 1:28. This would leave a step at 100mm down to the pavement which would require the use of a portable ramp, therefore this option would not provide independent access for wheelchair users.

Option B - As option A but with a raised level for the existing pavement in order to eliminate the single step. Because the raised pavement would create problems for people travelling along the pavement this option was not acceptable.

Option C - New level landing with sloping access at the side. This option forms the basis of the current proposals. The detailed design includes the following considerations:

- The slope will be flatter than 1:20 so that it is not a 'ramp' which would require handrails, etc. under the terms of Approved Document Part M 2004 (ADM)
- Two steps from the pavement up to the landing will have treads of approximately 280mm (as ADM 1.33m for external steps), subject to the constraints of the restricted space.
- The gate at the top landing will open inwards above the coping stone so as not to reduce the clear width of the sloping access route. The landing size of 900x 1600mm or more would allow a wheelchair user to turn between the sloping route and the entrance doors. The gate will have an opening width of at least 750mm
- Gates at the bottom landing - a clear opening width of 1200mm is required to allow a wheelchair user to turn to/from the sloping access route which has a width of about 800mm. Inward opening gates could have two leaves each of about 800 and 400mm opening width.
- The gates would need to be kept open during office hours and whenever a wheelchair user required independent access outside office hours.
- For power assisted of the main entrance doors, the push pad should be located between the sloping route and the entrance doors so as to be within reach of a wheelchair user.

4.5 Proposed Access improvements

The proposed alterations will result in the following improvements to accessibility at Verulam Buildings:

- Access to the entrance doors of No 5 will be unchanged for most people, except that the upper step will be relocated next to the pavement step, eliminating the existing hazard of 2 single steps.
- The double entrance doors will be operable with powered opening, with a pushpad, when entry is authorised by the receptionist. This will provide access for wheelchair users. The double door opening will also be easier for people delivering goods and documents, compared with opening one narrow door as present.
- Wheelchair users and anyone who cannot use the steps will have step-free access via the new sloping route, arriving at the front door and entering the building by the same route as everyone else.
- From the entrance door, there are step-free routes internally at ground floor level.
- The proposed alterations will require only minimal alterations to the existing entrance and railings, the alterations will be unobtrusive and the alterations will be reversible if required at some time in the future.

5.0 REFERENCES

Legislation

- Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)
- Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

Building Regulations

- Building Regulations Approved Document Part M (2004)
- Building Regulations Approved Document Part B (2006)

British Standards

- British Standard 8300:2009 Design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people - Code of Practice
- British Standard 9999:2008 Code of practice for fire safety in the design, management and use of buildings

Codes Of Practice

- Disability Rights Commission Code of Practice – Rights of Access to Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises: DfEE, 1999
- Planning and the Historic Environment - Policy Planning Guidance 15 1994

General

- Building Sight: A Handbook of Building and Interior Design Solutions to include the needs of Visually Impaired People, Barker, P, Barrick, J and Wilson, R, RNIB, HMSO, June 1995
- Parking for Disabled People, Traffic Advisory Leaflet 5/95, Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, London, 1995
- Designing for Accessibility - An Introductory Guide - Centre for Accessible Environments 1993
- Revised Guidelines for Reducing Mobility Handicaps: Towards a Barrier-Free Environment - Institution of Highways and Transportation 1991

Signage

- Technical Bulletin No.24: Signs - Royal National Institute for the Blind 1997
- Sign Design Guide, a guide to inclusive signage - Joint Mobility Unit and the Sign Design Society 2000

Heritage

- Streets for All, English Heritage 2005
- Easy Access to Historic Landscapes - English Heritage, October 2005
- Access plans: A Guide - Heritage Lottery Fund 2002
- Access to The Built Heritage Technical Advice Note - Historic Scotland 1996
- Access to the Historic Environment; Meeting the needs of disabled people - Donhead Publications, Foster, L. 1995
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Design Guidance

Local Policy

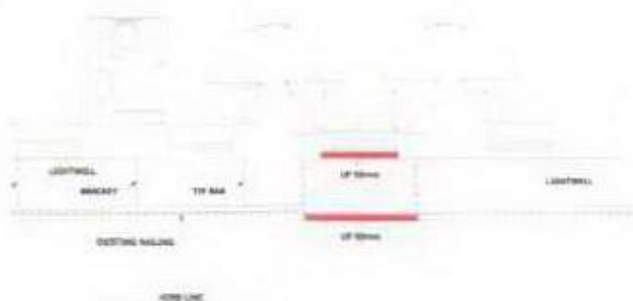
- The London Plan - Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London - Consolidated with Alterations since 2004, 2008

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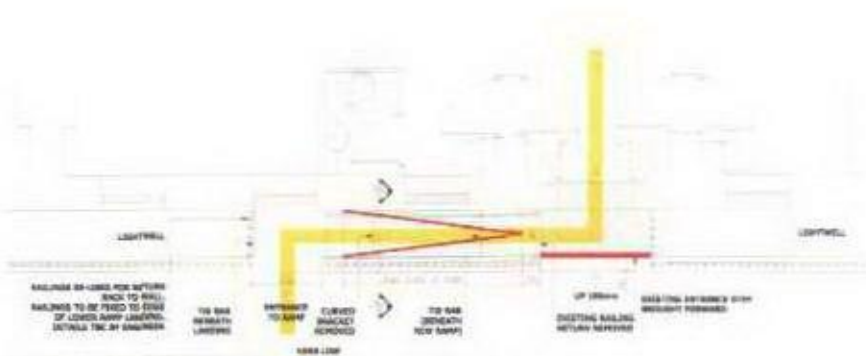
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COLOUR CODED KEY

- parking for people with disabilities
- wheelchair accessible route
- accessible entrance
- counter
- passenger lift
- V ramp
- step
- wheelchair accessible WC
- wheelchair accessible shower
- WC / changing room
- safe refuge
- escape stairs
- accessible emergency exit
- stopped emergency exit



EXISTING PLAN VIEW AT GROUND FLOOR LEVEL - 1:50



PROPOSED PLAN VIEW AT GROUND FLOOR LEVEL - 1:50