

Planning History

This application is for a re-newal of an existing extant consent reference 2004/5275/L for the same proposals. Mr Palmer's circumstances have not changed since 2004 however his sons condition has not yet deteriorated to the extent where he has moved into Voel House. It is therefore necessary to re-new the consent in anticipation of this eventuality.

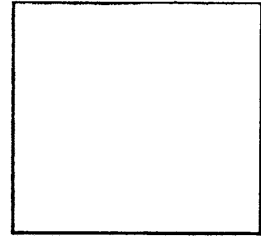
Design Report

The Design Report prepared in 2004 by Brian Perry Architect is still relevant and is forms a part of this Design and Access Statement.

DVM Architects

4A Murray Street London NW1 9RE
tel 020 7485 2121 fax 020 7267 2527
email studio@dvmarch.com

Brian Perry Architect



Design Report - Voel House

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	1
2. Historic Analysis and Conservation Assessment	1
3. Design	2
4. Access Plan	3

Introduction

The installation of a disabled wheelchair platform lift extending from the ground floor of the premises to the second floor will improve the use of the building for a disabled person where it would otherwise be impossible or unreasonably difficult to gain access.

A good and sensitive solution has been adopted which adds a new layer to the history of the building and gives easy and dignified access for disabled persons. Access and escape routes throughout for able-bodied persons will not be impeded.

The solution does not impinge physically or visually upon the principle rooms, main stairway or entrance hall nor will it affect the external appearance of the building or its structural framework. Following the implementation of the design the building will remain a coherent single entity with little alteration to the footprint but more suited to facilitating separate family functions and lifestyle to co-exist without creating actual structural separation or involving extensive alterations.

Historic Analysis and Conservation Assessment

The historic and architectural significance of Voel House and the proposed design is discussed in the report submitted by Messrs Historic Buildings Consultants written by John Martin Robinson. This document is included as one of the supporting documents of this application and concludes that the proposals would have no serious impact upon the special interest of this building.

The report describes the history and change to the building fabric from 1713, through the fire in the 1930's until today and sets out the reasoning behind the decision to pursue the proposed design.

Design

The justification for improved invalid access was made in the introduction and although current legislation is targeted at public buildings, recommendations that flow from them have been used as a guide for the new works planned for Voel House. The sources include English Heritage disabled access guidelines; the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA); the British Standard on Access BS 8300; the Disability Rights Task Force 'Exclusion to Inclusion' December 99 and Part M of the Building Regulations. It has been accepted that the sizing requirements in the latter are constrained by the building itself and by the self-imposed desire to retain the integrity of the building unaltered. However, as it is a building in private use such resulting strictures are not regarded as crucial and do not inhibit the design.

The proposal harmonises with the principles underpinning the protection of listed buildings by avoiding interference with those features which contribute to its significance and thus its listing.

No visible historic fabric will be disturbed or features affected by the proposals. Structural integrity is respected and not compromised.

No original openings, frames, window or door surrounds will be altered by the proposals and no significant timbers, framing or decorative surfaces lost or damaged. The small amount of disturbance which the DDA describes as "reasonable adjustment" permits full participation for the household in the events of daily life for all occupants.

In considering the viability for making the improvements the possibility of installing an inclined mechanical stair lift or climber within the main stairway was considered, but was rejected as unacceptable because of the physical damage that would be caused, its visual incongruity, as well as it being unpopular with users and most particularly because a discreetly placed lift was possible without it being visually intrusive. A mechanical lift of any kind within the stairwell could only be considered as a last resort.

The concept of the design is, that rather than introduce structural alterations that would compromise the integrity of the building as a whole, or attempt to divide the house in two, an acceptable degree of privacy is achievable by informal consent where wheelchair access can be gained to all parts of the building. This is made possible by the introduction of a wheelchair platform lift discreetly located adjacent to, but not within, the existing main horizontal and vertical circulation spaces.

Space is not at a premium in the location of the proposed shaft nor historic building consideration compromised. Entry/exit landings can double as points of evacuation

refuge on an escape route. The chosen orientation of the lift follows the accepted principles of best practice giving two-sided access and egress.

The form of lift selected requires no over-run, no lift pit and no overhead mechanism and will be anonymous in its surroundings.

The existing building, its details and dimensions etc. places certain constraints on the size of enclosure and of the platform itself such that not all of the recommendations in Part M of the Building Regulations can be met. However because the lift is for domestic use, such non-compliance is deemed to be acceptable and would not be construed as giving rise to discrimination. Such modification is seen as a balance between reasonable adjustment and the sensitivities of this historic building and the user.

What does result overall is that, from the 'setting down point' to the furthest reaches of the interior, unaided dignified access can be achieved.

Access Plan

There is good wheelchair and pedestrian access on arrival to the site via the off-street setting down point and a level pathway leading to the front door, for which no change is required.

Access at the front door can be improved by the introduction of a lightweight demountable threshold and ramp over-sailing the inside step into the hallway. The width of the hallway is sufficient to allow for a shared wheelchair pedestrian access and this forms part of the submission.

Should the ramp prove to be cumbersome at any time in the future, then periodically or permanently, a disused door leading into the dining room, adjacent to the hallway, could be utilised to provide direct access to this room and adjoining lift entrance. Either way good level access is thereafter available to the whole of the ground floor and garden beyond.

Without mechanical means wheelchair access from the ground floor to the upper floors is impossible.

A lift in the zone proposed would make all other habitable parts of the building accessible without hindrance to all users and is considered to be the lynch pin to the overall design.