

GOWER PLACE ACCESSIBLE RAMP - Response to planning comments

The following documents answers questions raised by Camden Council in regards to submitted application: 2020/3197/P

The first issue to highlight is the change in level. The green fill on the following pages highlights the area of slab over 1.2m above street level (shown red). Both of the suggested ramp entrances are within areas set above street level. In order to provide a ramp entrance here, the slab would need to be broken out internally.

This poses the following issues:

1. Significant structural challenges
2. Significant cost
3. The compromising of habitable rooms below
4. The compromising of staff and visitor security
5. The compromising of the fire strategy.

Both of the suggested ramps will require a landing within the building upon entrance, further increasing its length against our initial proposal.

The adjacent diagram highlights the current section through the loading bay. The dotted red line notes the slab level within secure gallery store beyond.

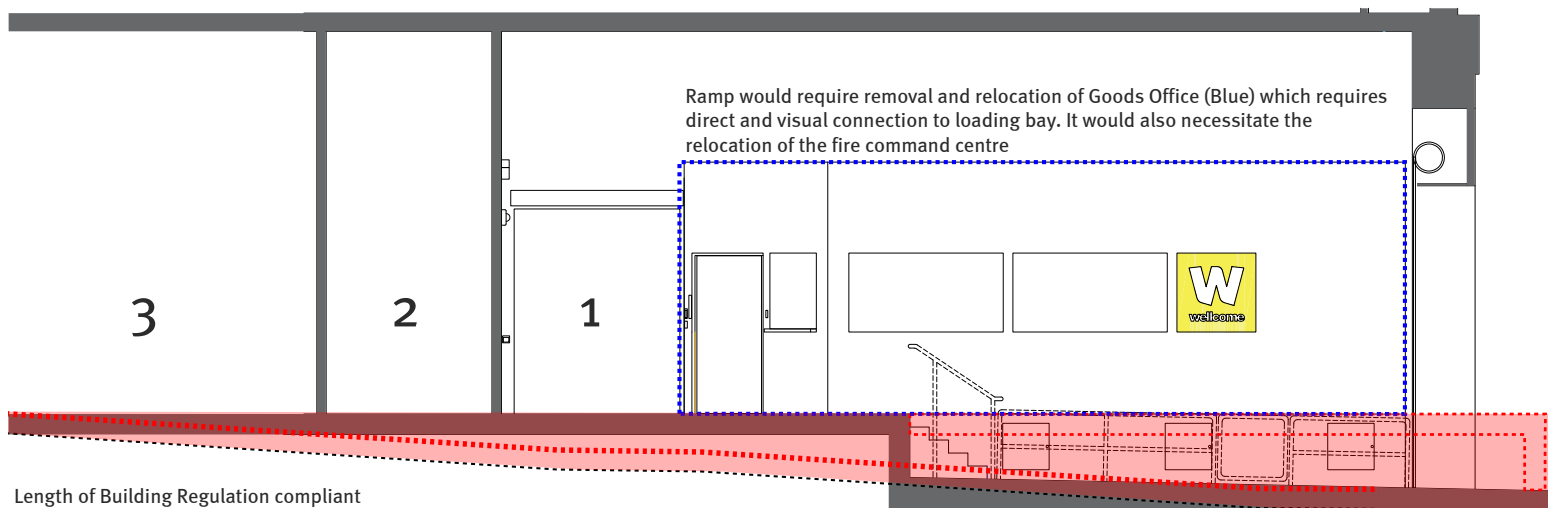
It is clear from the red fill adjacent that a significant portion of slab, and subsequent services attached to the underside (water, heating, ventilation, electrical) would need to be moved to facilitate this proposal.

This would pose not only a significant structural challenge, but also significant cost to the charity and disruption to the entire building during any works.

The removal of any slab will also effect the habitable rooms underneath. The reduced headroom and necessary additional structure would likely deem any spaces below unusable, resulting in already limited space becoming redundant.

Below the suggested ramp position B is a series of public conference suites. Positioning a ramp above this area will result in a reduction of these public facing facilities and diminish the services provided by the Wellcome Collection and any subsequent income.

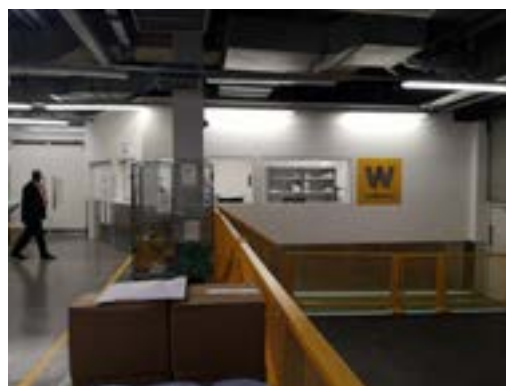
Adjacent are photos of the loading bay highlighting the space as well as the often present goods and deliveries which require transfer through the space suggested to contain the ramp internally. Unfortunately, due to security clearance reasons, we cannot include photos of the secure gallery store.



Length of Building Regulation compliant ramp extends past busy thoroughfare and main secure connection (1) between the Trust and Collection Buildings. It also passes through multiple important facilities which require locating in proximity to this location (2-Contractor Pass office & 3-Kitchens)

Habitable rooms below. Cutting and removal of slab for ramp will effect spaces below

Area of slabs within the red highlighted section would require cutting and removal. This is prohibitively expensive and not structurally possible without compromising the rooms below significantly

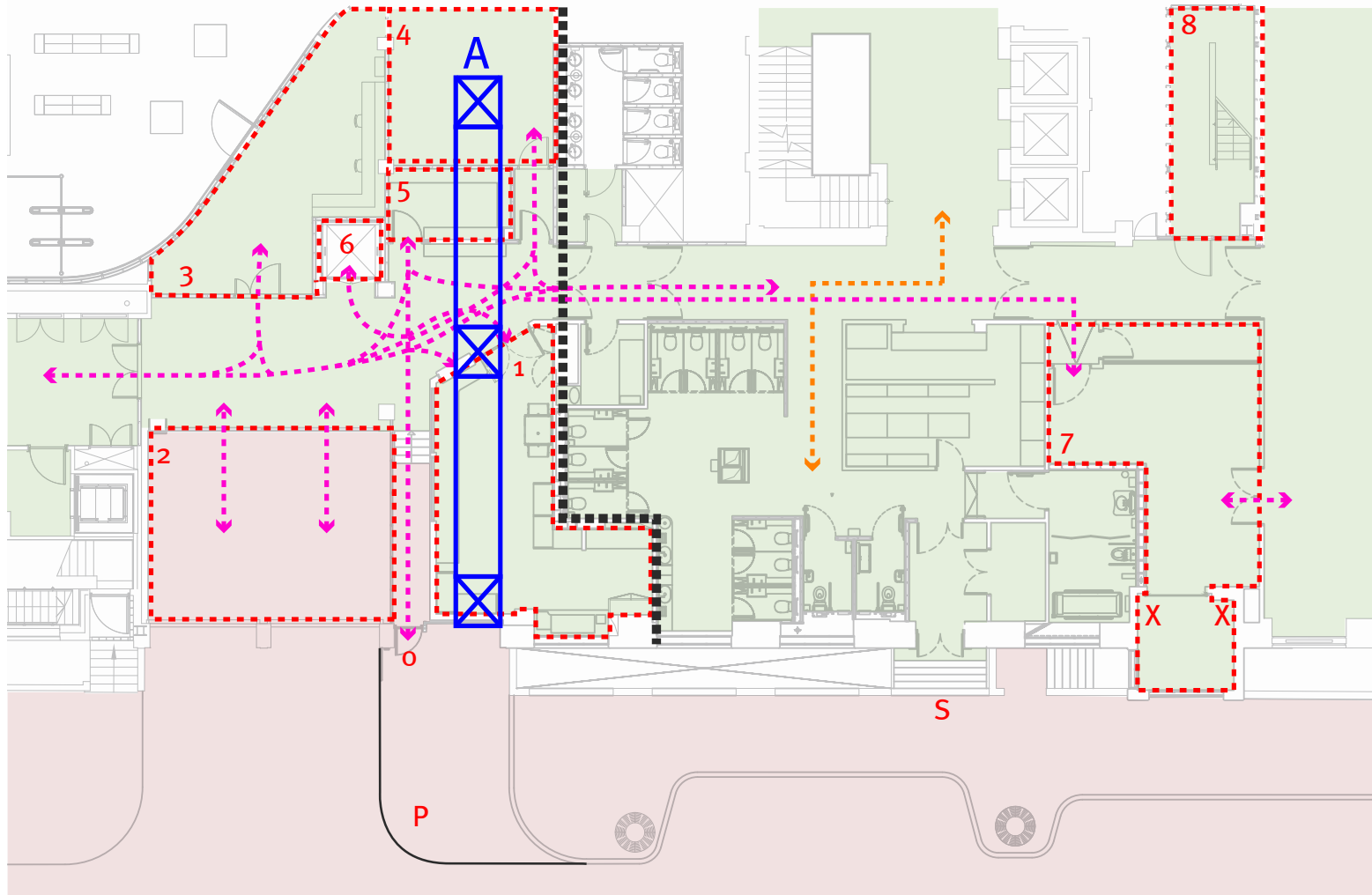


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Area Key

- o. Pedestrian & Delivery Access
- 1. Delivery and Post Room
- 2. Loading Bay
- 3. Bookshop office/store
- 4. Wellcome Collection & Trust Kitchen
- 5. Pass Office - Contractor sign-in
- 6. Main Goods lift for entire building
- 7. Secure Gallery Store
- 8. Protected fire escape stair

- Public Movement
- Staff Movement
- Raised Floor Level over 1.2m above Gower Place
- Street Level
- Access agreed compliant ramp
- Compliant 1500mm landing
- Secure Access controlled Line. No public access beyond



Position A (Goods Inward Office)

The dashed flow paths adjacent highlight how busy this area is within the back of house facilities. This area is a key transfer and utilised by several key departments. Staff members from all over both buildings visit this area regularly to use the goods office, goods lift and connect between the Wellcome Collection and Trust buildings.

The suggested ramp position will bisect this space, remove many key functions required to be located here and also position the ramp within the secure, non-public side of the building. The altering of this secure line to accommodate the ramp would introduce several complex issues including, but not limited to:

- Security connections to multiple spaces surrounding it. Currently one secure door separates the public from the back of house.
- Existing fire separation will be compromised and require fully reworking.

The following list refers to some of the key numbered functions on the adjacent plan:

Area 1. The suggested ramp position will require the removal of the Goods Inward office and Fire Command Centre. This room requires direct and visual connections to the busy delivery entrance (o) and the loading bay (2). There are no practical locations to move this space or reduce the capacity/size of the loading bay.

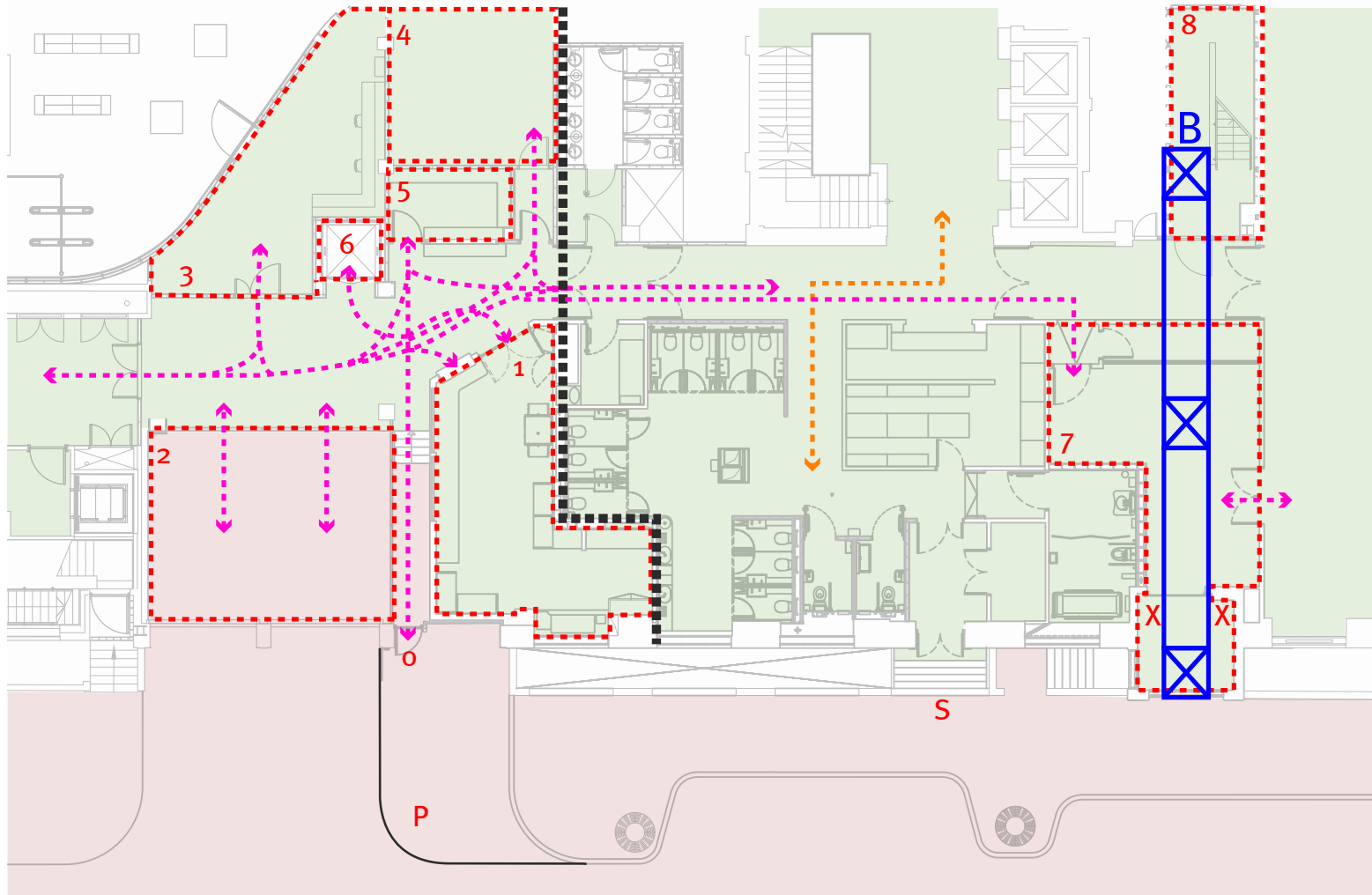
Area 4. This room is used as the kitchen for the Wellcome collection and Wellcome Trust. Deliveries are taken from the loading bay and food is transferred to the various cafés and restaurants via the area adjacent to the loading bay.

Area 5. The contractors pass office is required to be directly adjacent to the contractors entrance (o). This area has just undergone renovation and upgrading.

Area 6. The main goods lift for the entire building is located adjacent to the loading bay. Due to its position and the requirement for a level and minimum clear access of 1.8m to the Wellcome Collection, the suggested ramp would cross that path and result in excessive and intensive renovations to maintain the clear access requirements.

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Position B (Secure Gallery Store)

The orange line denotes the public movement within this area. Currently they are limited to travel from the main stair lobby to the cloakroom and wash room facilities.

The suggested position for the ramp in position B would place this within the secure gallery store and within another non-public facing area. Although seemingly easier to accommodate than position A, there are major obstacles including:

Area 7. The secure gallery store is a purpose built room to the international standard required to hold valuable artwork including high-security and humidity / climate control features. The room is located adjacent to the gallery and with level access to the loading bay (2) and the goods lift (6). Not only would it constitute a great expense to relocate this room, there is not a suitable area large enough, and within a suitable location to house this facility elsewhere within the Collection.

Area 8. The suggested ramp position, built to the minimum Building Regulation compliant specification would extend deep into the building. It would subsequently cross over a fire escape route and into a protected fire escape stair from the floors above. Introducing a bend within the ramp would compound the situation and would increase the total ramp length due to the increased landing requirements.

Steps. This position does not allow for the inclusion of a stair with the ramp, as highlighted with the Building Regulations, for users who find this less of a barrier than a ramp. This is because the complaint width extends the virtually the full width of the opening between structural walls (highlighted X). There would be no possible room for the addition stairs without pushing the ramp significantly further into the building. The utilisation of the existing steps located adjacent (S) are too steep and not compliant for this use and also contribute to a sense of 'othering' which something the Wellcome Collection is trying to avoid promoting with the new ramp.

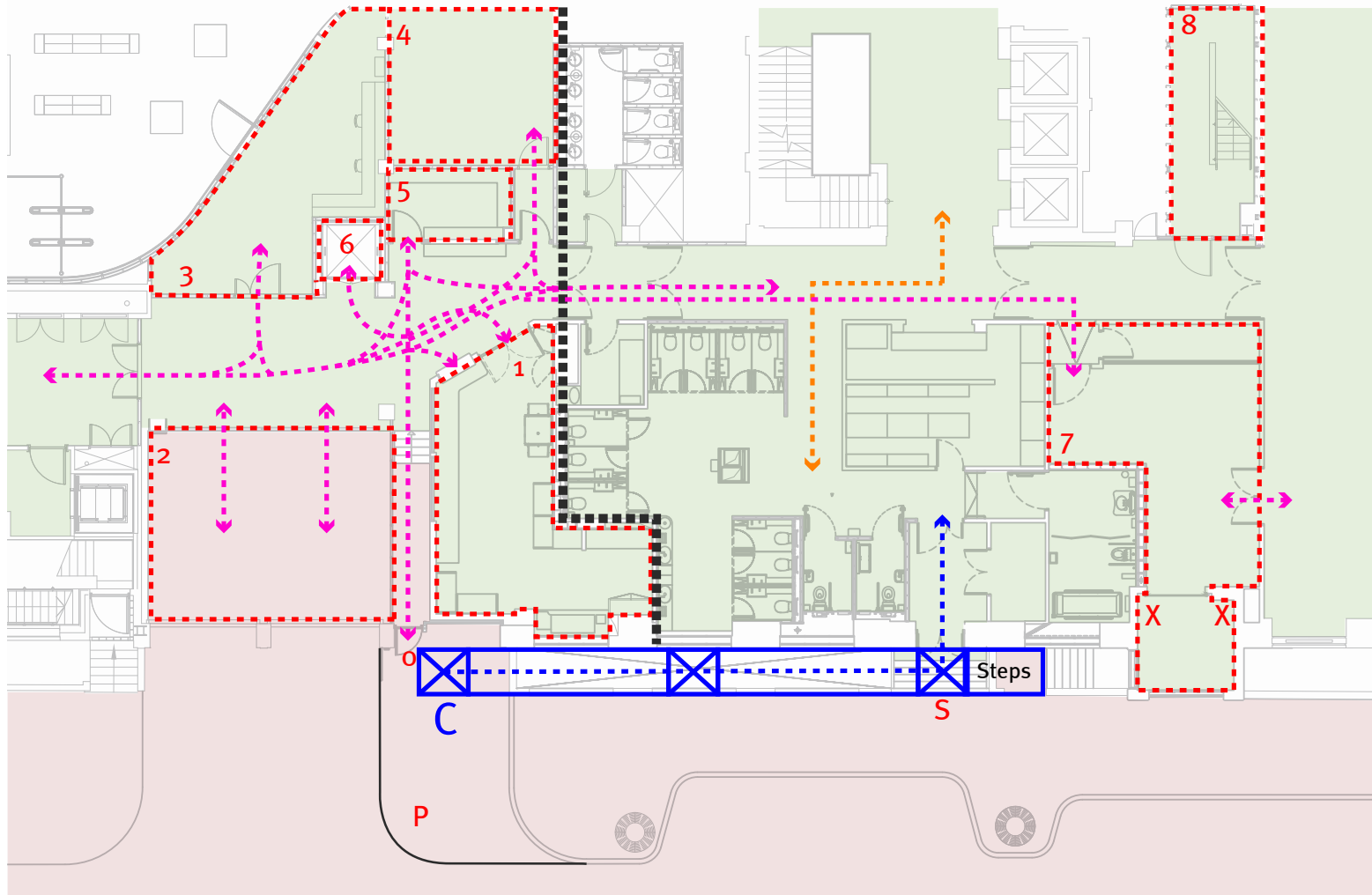
Othering is a term to describe the exclusion of people within the Social Model of Disability. If someone is othered, it means they are not to feel inclusive. For instance, if a lift was installed within a non-public part of the building, a person that finds steps a barrier would need to go to an alternative access. A lift should therefore be incorporated in the same place as an entrance for all.

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Position C (Preferred Position)

Position C refers to the previously submitted ramp. The dotted blue line highlights the access route from this new ramp. As previously noted, it connects directly to the accessible facilities which is highly beneficial to the users. There is also a future aspiration to connect this access directly through to the main stair lobby, creating a fully inclusive and welcoming entrance from Gower Place.

The proposal also includes the extension and upgrading of the pavement (P) to pedestrianise the current area behind the loading bay to provide safe access and ensure physical separation to the loading bay access.

This ramp is the same dimension as those in A and B. Careful development has ensured the ramp is achievable and does not reduce any habitable area within the Wellcome Collection, compromise any access or fire escape routes, or result in any costly structural alterations.

This position also allows for the inclusion of a stair, as highlighted with the Building Regulations, for users who find this less of a barrier than a ramp. This results in the aspiration of the Wellcome Trust to avoid any sense of 'othering' and promote full inclusivity.

Further to the above, the visual presence of an external ramp promotes inclusivity and clearly helps to identify the location of the accessible entrance to all users in an evident manner.

We have worked closely with the Wellcome Trust and Wellcome Collection to explore all possible opportunities to locate a ramp within the building. Extensive development has shown that the position of the ramp (C) as submitted within the planning application is the only suitable location without having to significantly redesign the entire ground floor; resulting in prohibitive costs and an unacceptable loss of habitable space, reducing the programme provision for the gallery or requiring the relocation of critical operational facilities to an alternative area not conducive to their function.