

Inclusive access statement

British Library, St Pancras

Piazza steps, ramps and terraces,

Entrance hall platform lift proposal

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1.1 Purpose of the report

This Access review has been prepared to review the proposals:

- to create a new ramp at the western end and accessible steps to the entrance terrace
- for a new platform lift to the front entrance hall

It based on a review of the design by Long and Kentish architects in their *New Front Entrance Hall Lift proposal Concept design report*, dated 27 June 2019.

David Bonnett Associates (DBA carried out a site visit and access survey on the 29 April 2016 and a subsequent on the 9 July 2019, to assess the route and access to the lift and whether the proposals met current best practice standards.

The proposed new external entrance arrangements with a new ramp to the side and wider entrance landing replacing the shallow steps, are also commented on.

1.2 Method of review

This access appraisal describes how the scheme has been progressed with consideration of the principles of inclusive design including visitors, staff and the wider community.

The report considers the requirements of all users, including:

- People with mobility impairments;
- People with visual impairments;
- Deaf people;
- Older people; and
- Small children.

The meaning of 'disabled' in this Access Statement is as defined in the Equality Act. Refer to Appendix 1.

Note:

DBA provides guidance and advice as access consultants. The consultancy does not officially approve designs, nor does it provide confirmation that a design complies with statutory standards. This remains the responsibility of the designers and the approvals authority.

1.3 The standards and policy

The access provisions are reviewed against the access regulations and standards that apply, which are identified below.

The Building Regulations 2010, Approved Document M (Access to and use of buildings) Volume 2: Building other than dwellings, HM Government, 2015 edition;

The Building Regulations 2010, Approved Document K (Protection from falling, collision and impact), HM Government, 2013 edition;

Best Practice

British Standard 8300:2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment, Vol 1: External environments and Vol 2: Buildings, Code of Practice, British Standards Institution, 2018;

A full list of references and a description of relevant legislation, regulations, standards and guidance are detailed in Appendix 1 | References for inclusive design.

1.4 The Equality Act

Statutory consents

When considering a reasonable adjustment to a physical feature, the Equality Act does not override the need to obtain consents such as planning permission, building regulations approval, listed building consent, scheduled monument consent and fire regulations. If the consent is not given, there is still a duty to consider a reasonable means of avoiding the feature.

Refer to Appendix A1.1 for further information.

Design standards

Service providers and public authorities carrying out their functions do not have to remove or alter a physical feature of a building for a period of 10 years from construction or installation if it accords with the relevant objectives, design considerations and provisions in Approved Document M. They may still need to consider a reasonable means of avoiding the feature.

1.5 Management and maintenance

Once building works are complete full accessibility will rely on effective facilities management.

Management items will range from provision of a good quality website in a public building to the effective maintenance of lifts in residential buildings. Inspection of specialist devices and training of staff should become a regular element of management processes. Access Management Plans can form part of a building operator's on-going duties.

1.6 Access aims

This design appraisal is based on the following access principles:

- To follow design guidance given in the building regulations, relevant British Standards and other currently published good practice guidance about meeting the needs of disabled people; and
- To develop proposals that meet modern requirements while respecting the building/site's historic significance.

2.0 Overview of access provisions

The proposals commented on include:

- Piazza steps, ramps and terraces proposal
- Proposal for installation of a platform lift in a prominent position in the front entrance hall to connect the upper ground level with the entrance level.

2.1 Existing situation

2.1.1 Ossulton Street entrance

The entrance at Ossulton Street has a row of on-street Blue Badge parking bays near the British Library entrance, which makes this the accessible entrance for disabled people arriving by car or being dropped off. There are 2 bays to the north of Gate 1 and 5 bays to the south. The bays are outside the site and the responsibility of London Borough of Camden. There is no dropped kerb from any of the 'disabled bays' to the footway. The only dropped kerb is the vehicular crossover to the main gate. It is recommended that a dropped kerb is provided at the pedestrian gate to the south.



The pedestrian entrance to the south side of external entrance provides step-free access to the Piazza.



Pedestrian access to south side of entrance

2.1.2 Existing approach: piazza, sloping steps and ramp

The Library entrance landing is currently accessed via a continuous row of three shallow sloping steps up from the piazza level. These in effect are a series of single shallow steps set at a slope that are a trip hazard, even though visually highlighted in a contrasting colour.



Existing shallow ramped single steps that are a trip hazard

There is an existing ramp at the eastern end of the entrance, but this is not very visible and is located to the opposite end of the accessible entrance at Ossulton Street.



Existing ramp at far end of accessible entrance from Ossulton Street

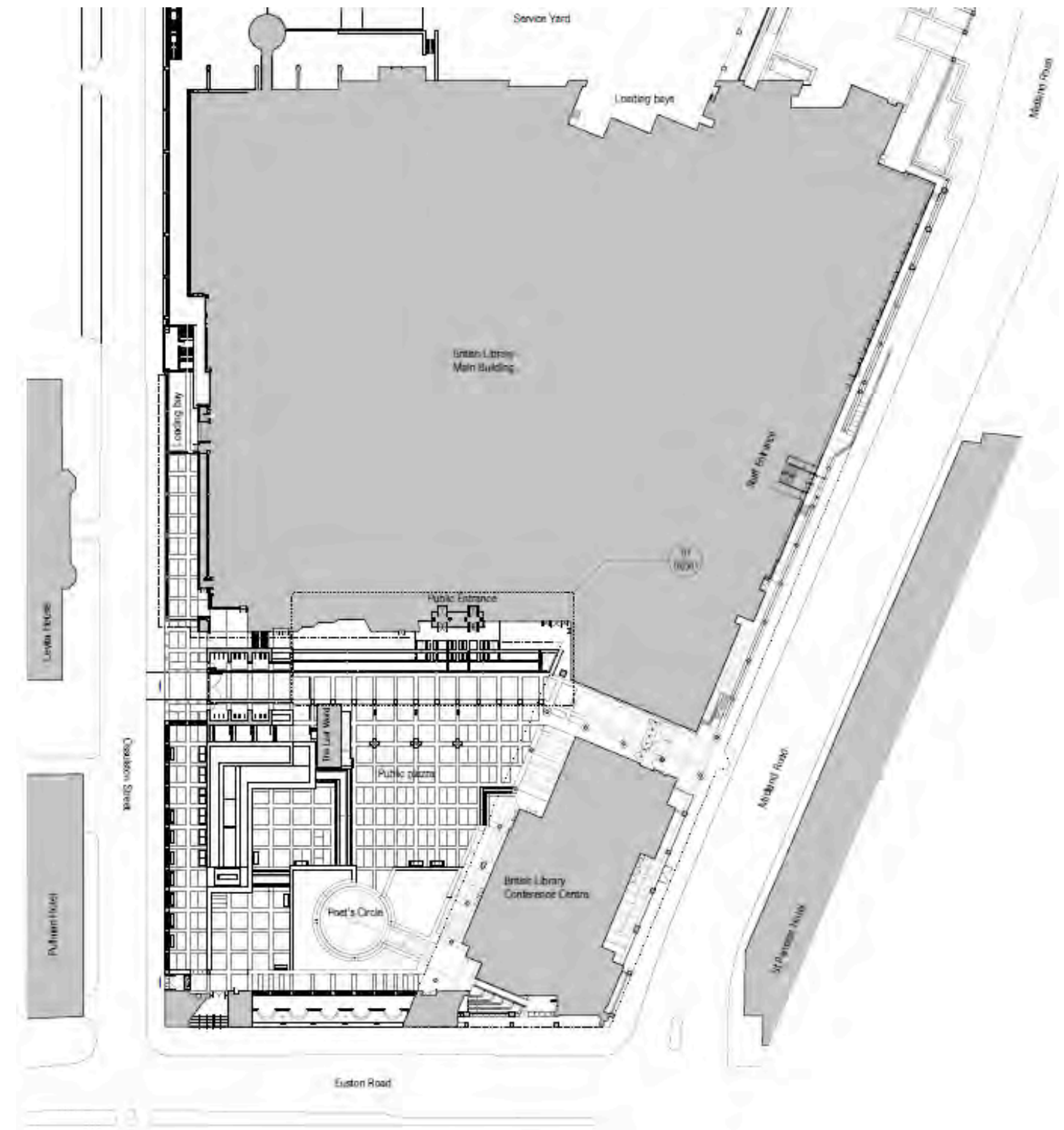


Ramp at Midland Road end constructed in 2012-2014

Background and context to current arrangement

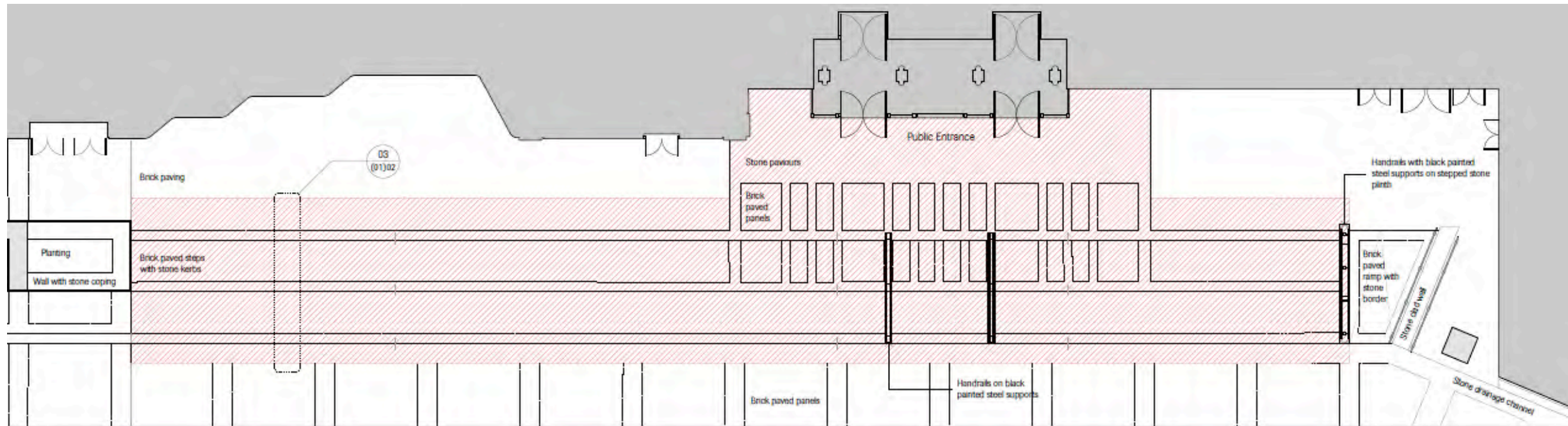
Early arrangements in the late 1990's for step-free access into the British Library were based on arrival from Midland Road. Here multiple disabled Blue Badge parking spaces were provided with a pedestrian route through what is now Security. These measures, combined with external and internal ramps and the lift towards the east of the building, ensured step-free access to both the Library and the adjoining Conference Centre. Subsequent highway changes to Midland Road included the removal of the Blue Badge bays and (separately) the closure of the pedestrian route.

Both these measures - disabled parking and pedestrian routes - were later relocated to Ossulton Street. The proposed introduction of the new western plaza ramp towards the Ossulton Street entrance is the final part in the process of providing step-free access into the Library. It will once more provide a coherent and logical accessible entry route in to the Library building.

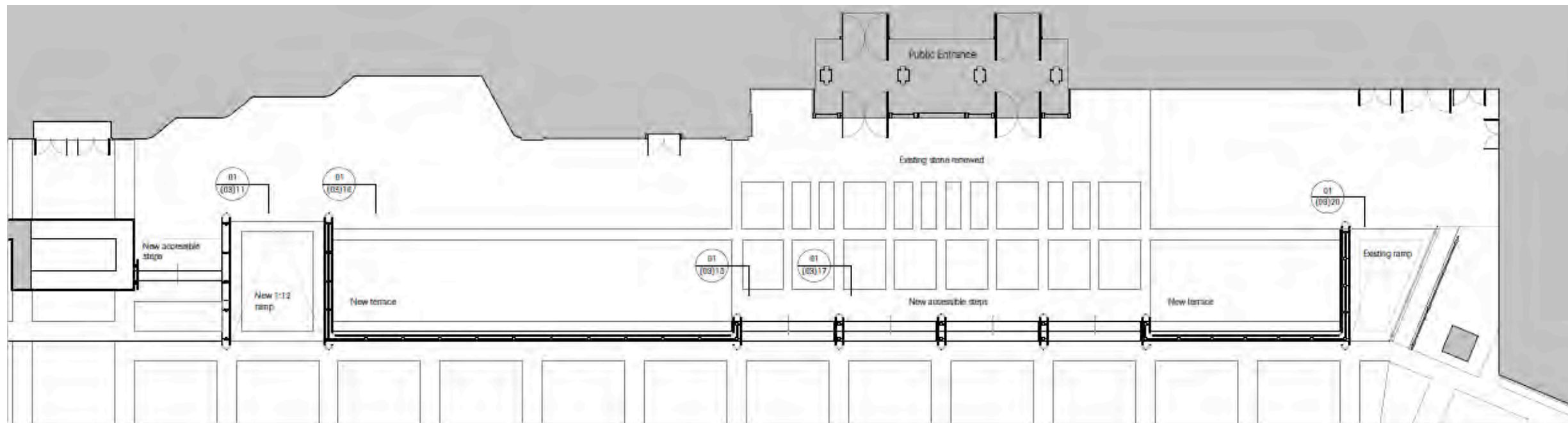


Location plan

2.2 Piazza alterations: new steps and ramp



Existing layout



Proposed layout

The proposed external alterations will eliminate the trip hazard posed by the shallow ramped steps to the level of the entrance and are a significant improvement to access.

The proposed new ramp nearer to the Ossulton Street entrance will improve step-free access to the main entrance.



Slope down from Ossulton Street to Piazza level, with pedestrian entrance and raised footway to the side



Location of new ramp and adjoining new steps

2.2.1 New gentler ramp to the western end



The new ramp will provide a more direct step-free route to the entrance from Ossulton Street where the ‘disabled parking’ bays are located. It will provide a gentler slope than the existing ramp at the eastern end.

The ramp needs to fit in between the existing roadway and the entrance landing and a gradient of 1:12 will be achieved for a length of 4.6m. There is no space for an intermediate landing as required for a ramp of this length, due to the necessity of working within the historic grid of the Grade I listed piazza. However, the ramp has a generous width of 3500mm with handrails to both sides, which will make it more comfortable and easy to use.

2.2.2 New accessible steps



The entire row of three shallow ramped steps across the length of the entrance landing will be removed.

These will be replaced by a row of ergonomic steps meeting current regulations and best practice standards with risers of 140mm and goings of 350mm. One set will be located adjacent to the ramp at the western end, and one wider set will be directly in front of the entrance.

The new steps will be brought forward to the line of the access roadway providing a wider and more usable upper landing which will make it easier for queues on a level surface and for groups milling around.

The entrance set of steps will be divided into four sections which will have 3500mm width between handrails. This will provide adequate support to those using the steps and would be less obtrusive in this Grade I listed environment than providing 9 sets of railings along this length.

Handrails will be ergonomically profiled grippable bronze 45mm diameter rail be provided to both sides of the ramp and the steps at a height of 900-1000mm, which will extend 300mm horizontally beyond the top and bottom of the steps and ramp and curve round at the ends to provide a double handrail usable by those ascending as well as descending the steps and ramp.

Nosings will be visually highlighted with a 55mm securely attached flame textured **Royken granite** strip to tread and riser that will also provide slip resistance.

Tactile corduroy paving will be provided at the top and bottom landings 400mm from the edge of the steps. These will be 400mm deep where not in direct line of travel, and 800mm deep where in direct line of travel.

LED lighting will be provided at the steps from the existing wall and the baluster plinth.

2.2.3 New terraces at landing level

There will be two new raised level terraces created both sides of the entrance steps.

These will provide out of the way areas for groups to gather while leaving and entering the building. Currently groups assemble on the single sloping steps which is a dangerous situation.

The two terraces at either side of the entrance at the upper landing level will have a balustrade to the raised edge that is 1100mm high.

2.3 Proposed new platform lift at the entrance hall

The proposal for the installation of a new platform lift to the upper ground level will significantly improve access for disabled people, and those carrying heavy books, bags or wheeling items.

The existing passenger lift to access the upper ground level is out of the way, a long distance from the entrance, and not visible from the entrance hall.

2.3.1 Current access to upper ground levels

At present, when a visitor enters the front entrance hall, they find themselves in a multi-level atrium with a number of flights of steps facing them, connecting the different levels.

There is no obvious way to access the upper ground level, especially for a first time visitor. The current arrangement for access to this level is by means of a small passenger lift which is located in an out of the way location in the north-east corner, and is undersized by current standards.

The following photographs illustrate the route to the existing lift.

View when entering front entrance hall

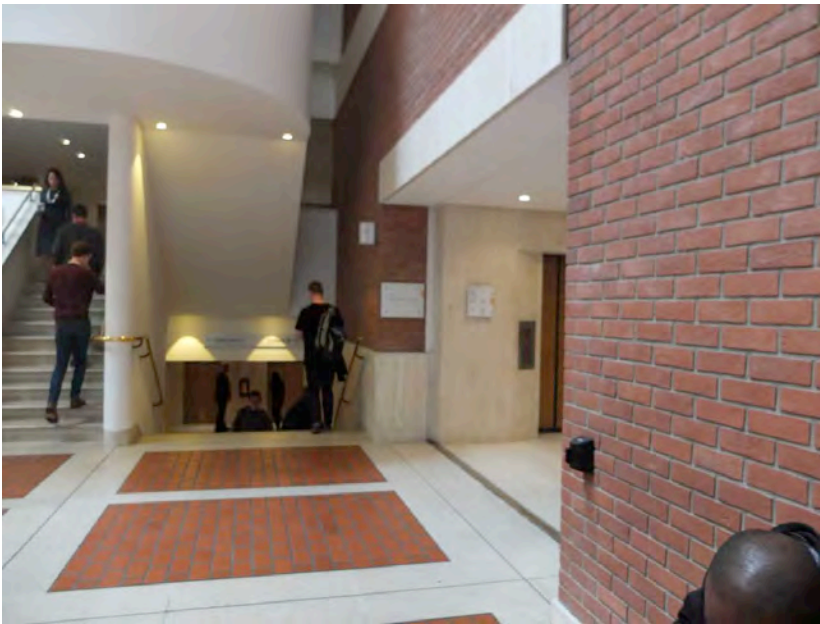


Route to lift in far corner to the other side of the entrance hall, out of the way and not intuitive. Requires over 50m travel distance.



There is a passage to the lift to the side of the information desk, past the stairs down to the lower ground

The lift is set into an alcove off the circulation route with a small projecting flag sign, and does not have an obvious presence until you have reached the recess.



2.3.2 Proposed location of new platform lift

The new platform lift is proposed to be located in a prominent central position at the entrance hall next to the reception desk.

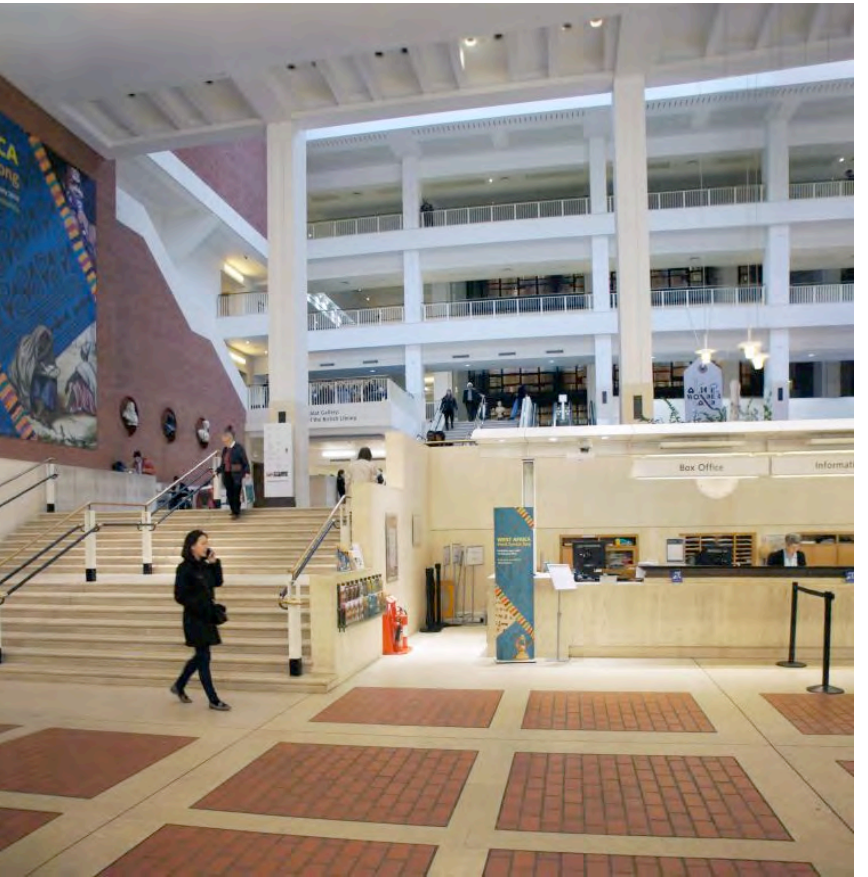
It would be highly visible when entering from the main doors.

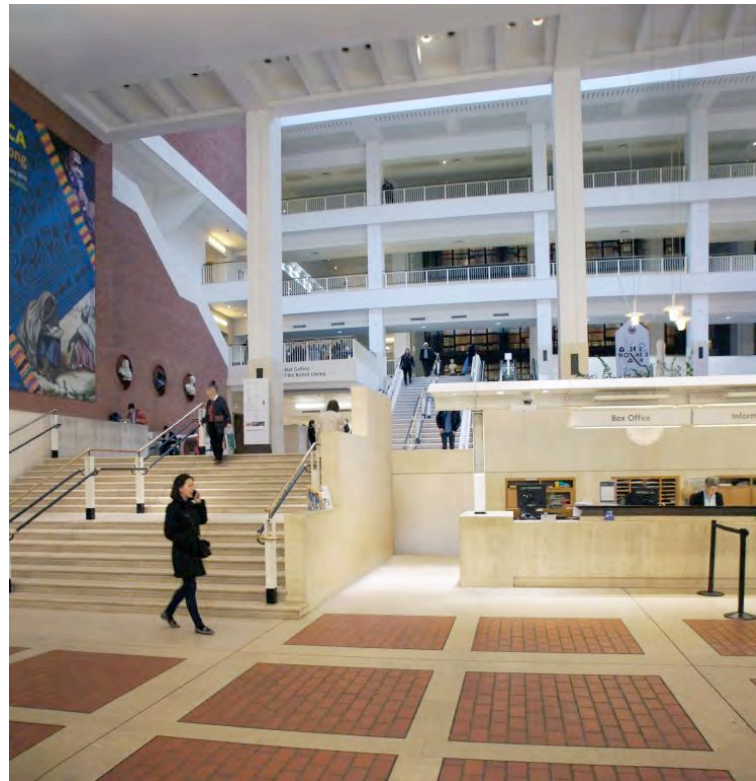
It would complement the stairs, providing a clear message of inclusivity and equality for those who cannot manage stairs, by providing this facility in a similarly prominent position as the stairs.

It is important for a prominent public institution to provide a message that provision for disabled people is as important as for those who can climb stairs. The location next to the main stairs, and prominence of this lift from the entrance hall are key to the indication of inclusivity.

At upper ground level, the lift would open immediately onto the public concourse providing a similar level of access as the current staircase does.

Proposed location for lift adjacent to the information desk at ground level





Visual indicating location of lift at ground level, with clutter and storage removed providing a clear route and view of the lift.



Proposed location at upper ground level



Visual at upper level indication the wall cut back to provide a visual connection with the lower level and a clear view of the lift at the upper level.

2.3.3 Location and design of lift

The proposed location of the new platform lift is between the main stairs and the reception desk in a prominent position for visitors attempting to orient themselves.

This is immediately adjacent to the main stairs to the upper level and so intuitive to identify and locate.

This will be a bespoke platform lift with open sides and glass and metal framed half height doors and guarding.

The lift glass doors will contrast against the existing stone construction making it easily visible.

The approach to access the lift between the existing stone reception desk and the wall of the staircase is an adequate 1340mm to the side of the reception desk, and widens out to 1500mm behind the reception desk providing the required 1500 x 1500mm landing in front of the lift.

Existing display, storage and clutter to the side of the reception desk will be removed to provide an unobstructed approach to the lift.

The size of the lift compartment will meet current standards at 1100mm wide and 1400mm long.

It will be a through lift with openings both ends which has the advantage for a wheelchair user of not requiring turning within the lift.

2.4 Conclusion

The proposed reconfiguration of the entrance piazza, with removal of existing shallow ramped steps and replacement with new accessible steps and a new ramp to the western end near the Ossulton Street entrance meeting best practice standards is a considerable improvement over the existing situation which does not meet regulatory or best practice standards and constitutes a trip hazard.

The provision of a new platform lift in a prominent location within the front entrance hall is a major part of the process of providing step-free inclusive access within the British Library.

The installation of this centrally located lift to provide access to the upper ground level from the ground floor entrance level will significantly improve access for disabled people, and those carrying heavy books, bags or wheeling items.

The two interventions, external and internal, provide a coherent and logical accessible entry route in to the Library building.

Appendix 1 | Reference for inclusive design

A1.1 Legislation

- **Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') combines and supersedes previous separate discrimination legislation (including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended ('the DDA') and the disability discrimination provisions of SENDA 2001 for England, Wales and Scotland. People are protected from discrimination and harassment based on 'protected characteristics'; victimising anyone as a result of action taken in connection with the Act is also unlawful. There are nine different protected characteristics under the Act which have different levels of protection depending on the context (such as employment, provision of goods and services or the provision of education). This Access Statement focuses on the protected characteristic of disability; the definition of disability is essentially the same as under the DDA.

The types of discrimination that can arise in relation to disability are:

- Direct disability discrimination;
- Indirect disability discrimination;
- Treating disabled people unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of their disability without justification; and
- A failure to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people ('the RA duty'). The RA duty works in different ways depending on who requests the reasonable adjustments to be made, for example an employee or a member of the public.

The Act also provides protection for people who are treated less favourably because of their relationship with a disabled person (such as a carer) or for people treated less favourably because they are mistakenly

believed to be disabled. A disabled person can always be treated more favourably than a non-disabled person.

If an employer is a listed public authority (such as a local authority) they will be subject to the public sector equality duty. If the employer is not a public authority but carries out a public function as part of its work, it will be covered by the general part of the equality duty in relation to the exercise of that function.

The public sector equality duty seeks to promote equality from within an organisation and the general duty requires the organisation to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Due regard must be given to these three aims when undertaking procurement and to comply with procurement law, consideration must be given to the extent to which equality considerations are relevant and proportionate to the subject matter of the contract.

Most of the listed public authorities are also subject to the specific duty (which operates slightly differently in England and Wales). This involves reporting requirements to demonstrate compliance with the three aims of the general duty. The public sector equality duties are relevant both to the design and the management of the built environment.

The Reasonable Adjustment Duty and specific building provisions

The Equality Act does not contain any specific requirements for the built environment and therefore

has no relevance to 'compliance' in respect of physical building standards.

Statutory Consents

When considering a reasonable adjustment to a physical feature, the Act does not override the need to obtain consents such as planning permission, building regulations approval, listed building consent, scheduled monument consent and fire regulations. If the consent is not given, there is still a duty to consider a reasonable means of avoiding the feature.

A1.2 Regulations and Standards

Building Regulations 2010

- **Approved Document K - Protection from falling, collision and impact**, HMSO, 2013.
- **Approved Document M (Access to and use of buildings) – Volume 2: Building other than dwellings**, HMSO, 2015 edition;

Regulations 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 Equality Act.

National Planning Policy

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012

The NPPF states that all developments should be designed to be inclusive and that this should be addressed by local policies. It also advises that local planning authorities should assess their housing requirements by considering the needs of the different groups in the community including children, older people and disabled people.

A1.3 References

British Standards

- *British Standard 8300:2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment, Vol 1: External environments and Vol 2: Buildings, Code of Practice*, British Standards Institution, 2018;
- *BS 5656-2:2004 Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts. Particular applications for passenger and goods passenger lifts. Accessibility to lifts for persons including persons with disability*, British Standards Institute, 2004.
- *BS EN 81-28:2003, Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts. Remote alarm on passenger and goods passenger lifts*, British Standards Institution, 2003
- *BS EN 81-41:2010, Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts. Special lifts for the transport of persons and goods. Vertical lifting platforms intended for use by persons with impaired mobility*, British Standards Institution, 2010
- *BS EN 81-70:2003, Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts. Particular applications for passenger and goods passenger lifts. Accessibility to lifts for persons including persons with disability*, British Standards Institution, 2003

International Standards

- *ISO 9386-1:2000, Power-operated lifting platforms for persons with impaired mobility*, British Standards Institution, 2000

Signage, Lighting And Wayfinding

- *The Colour, Light and Contrast Manual: Designing and Managing Inclusive Built Environments*, Bright K., Cook G., Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
- *Sign Design Guide: a guide to inclusive signage*, JMU and the Sign Design Guide, 2003

Buildings

- *Designing for Accessibility*, Lacy A., CAE/RIBA Publishing, 2012.
- *Inclusive Design Toolkit*, London Development Agency, 2009.
- *Building Sight: a Handbook of Building and Interior Design Solutions to Include the Needs of Visually Impaired People*, Barker, Barrick and Wilson, RNIB/HMSO, 1995.

Arts, Culture And Sport

- *Museums and Art Galleries*, Adrian Cave, RIBA Publishing, 2007

Heritage

- *Easy Access to Historic Buildings*, Adams (John), Historic England, 2015.
- *Easy Access to Historic Landscapes*, Historic England, 2015
- *Access Plans: A guide*, Heritage Lottery Fund