



Camden High Line

Access Report - 08.02.2022

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Overview

Accessibility for disabled and older people is already built into the Camden High Line ethos and all parties within the project are placing the concepts of Inclusive Design at its heart. This report aims to highlight the key elements of the design that will ensure an accessible inclusive outcome that benefits all in the community and for all visitors to this tourist attraction, creating a new goal of inclusive design for similar future projects globally.

Goals

1. Provide an independent, expert audit of the accessibility of the current design proposals and highlight key elements of accessibility with the designs
2. Suggest any further features of the design that could further improve the projects inclusivity and accessibility

Outline of Report

This report will focus on the accessibility of the Camden Gardens entrances to the Highline and explore early access considerations of the wider project.



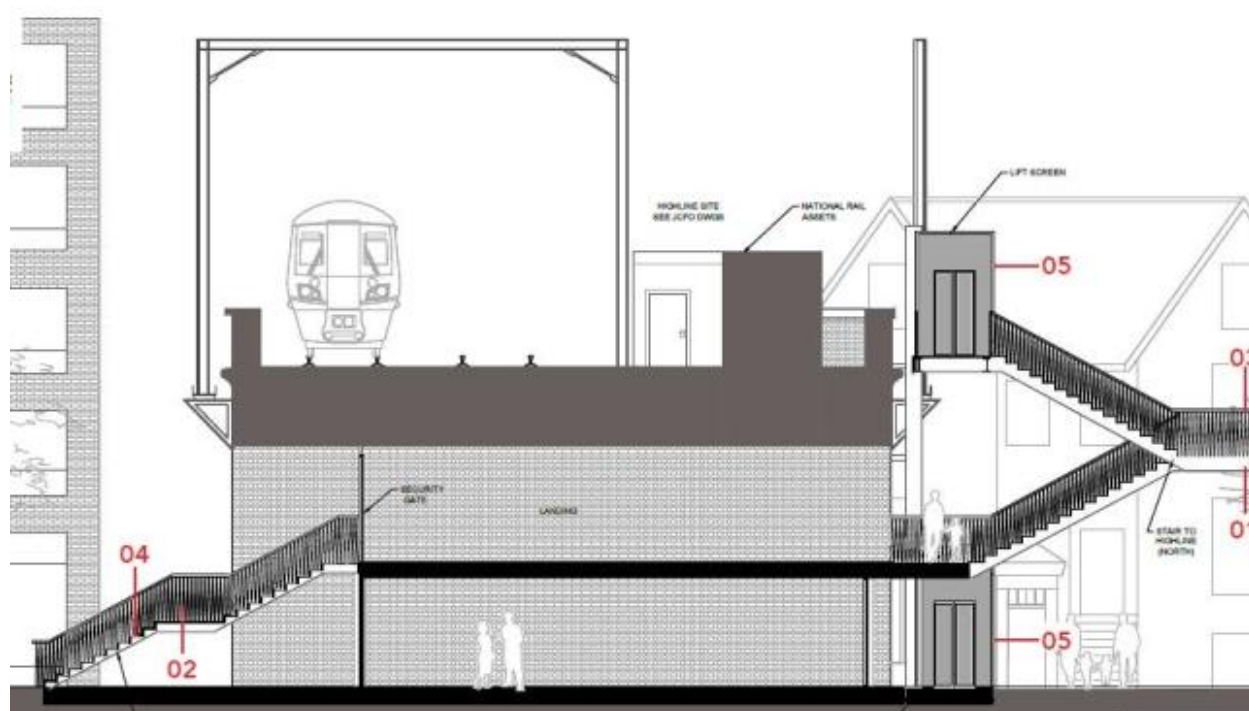
Current Design and Accessibility



The Camden Gardens entrances to the Highline create an eye catching addition to the existing railway infrastructure with accessibility threaded throughout.

There will be an open lift (element 5 on the design below) to the north side (towards Kentish Town) of the gardens with stepped access to the south. The lift is currently planned to be either an 8 person or a 10 person capacity. The 10 person capacity lift would allow more users of mobility equipment, such as wheelchairs (manual and power) and users of smaller pavement scooters, to be able to turn around inside the lift. This will allow easier entry and egress from the lift. There will also be

a mirror, as per planning regulations, to ensure those who need to reverse out of the lift can do so with ease. The lift will be signposted from both sides of the entrance, with clear signage to the north side of the site.

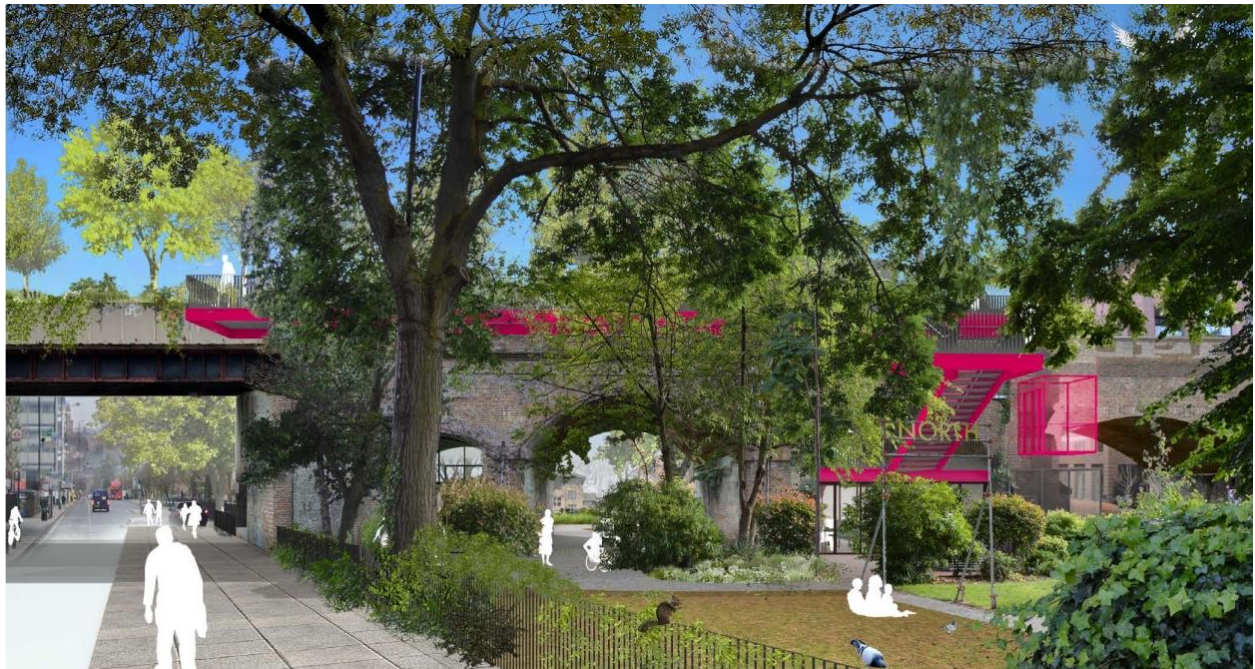


The south side (towards Camden Town) stepped access (elements 01, 02, 03, & 04) will have the double handrails to ensure safe and accessible use by users of all heights and the landing between the first flight of steps on the south side and the continuation of the staircase on the north side will be a resting and meeting point with seating. This will allow users who can walk and who prefer not to use lifts to access the Highline safely and easily.

The stairs will have anti slip coating with tactile markers at the first and last step, to ensure visually impaired users clearly understand their position on the staircase. Colour will be used as a way finding element, using high contrast within the entire design (within keeping of the entire design scheme for the Highline branding and the local area requirements). Signage will also point the way clearly.

There have been discussions around a stepped entrance on the north side, but this raises issues of sight lines to the lift and problems around the security of the entire Highline. By installing a staircase to the floor on the north side the clear lift will be far harder to see and to find. The lift itself will be left open to recreate the experience and view of using the staircase, thus creating a shared equality of experience. The current single sided stepped entry allows for security to be fitted at the landing area, but a south side staircase would require encasing in a lockable

cage. This would lessen sightlines and take away the design aesthetic, and while it might appear to add to the accessibility it could lessen it due to the reduction in visibility and ease of finding the lift. The exploration of a larger lift is a possible answer to allowing a shared experience for larger groups containing parties who cannot manage stairs.



Access At A Glance

I. Lift

An 8 or 10 person lift as the minimum, larger lifts allow wheelchairs/scooters to turn inside the lift, with a mirror to ensure ease of reverse for those who require this means of exit. The lift will be left open to recreate the experience and views of those using the staircases. (It is important to note that while a larger lift is possible in this location, in other sites along the Camden Highline it may not be suitable - this is a consideration around lift size for the entire Highline project still in consideration).

II. Landing Areas for Lift

Areas outside the lift on both floors that allow for a turning circle if required.

III. Clear Sightlines

The lift will be clearly visible from the north side entrance and there will be signage to the lift from the south to ensure ease of wayfinding . The stepped access will be equally clearly signposted from the north side pointing to the south side steps, ensuring ease of wayfinding from all approach directions. All signage will follow the design solutions, chosen to be in keeping with the overall brand of the highline. Clear wayfinding signage should allow the current kiosk design not to require modification.

IV. Accessible Staircases

Stairs to be designed to have full access features. Anti-slip surfaces, two handrails (low and standard height), tactile markers a top and bottom of each run of steps, high contrast colour palette.

V. Landing Areas for Staircase

Using the design of the staircase to facilitate accessibility for those who either cannot or prefer not to use the lift. With seating provided to allow disabled people, older people and families with children easier access to the Highline.

VI. Accessible Walkways, Signposting, Signage, Materials and Surfaces

Throughout the development, accessibility will be built in. Alongside the design, the materials, surfaces and wayfinding methodologies will have accessible inclusive design at their heart. From design, to build, to final fix and sign off, inclusive accessible thinking will shape the project and its outcomes, Mik Scarlet Access will lead this drive, and assist in consulting local and national disability groups to ensure a holistic approach to the Highline ethos of providing a facility for all in Camden.

Access Throughout The Project (Phase 1)



The next part of Phase 1 of the Highline project is the Camden Road/Royal College Street entrance.

This will have the stepped and lift access, and will continue the drive for a fully accessible inclusive design ethos throughout the Highline project ensuring that all residents and visitors to Camden can have a shared equal experience of this new feature of the globally famous part of London.

There are design challenges to confront, especially the positioning and size of the lift. This is still in negotiation with the site owners, but the best most accessible solution will be the one chosen.

With the entire project being retrofitted to existing railway infrastructure there may be sites where current building constraints impact on the accessibility but with clever design and the passion to develop an inclusive facility for Camden better than fitting the minimum regulations will drive all involved to achieve the best solutions possible.

Throughout the Camden Highline development, all paths will be designed to be accessible and will be laid with materials that ensure safe and easy transit for all. They will ensure drainage while providing a level non-slip surface, and a clear wayfinding experience.



The Future

As the Camden Highline project progresses, the entire team is committed to creating an inclusive accessible design throughout. A key goal of the project is to not only develop access as a key design driver, but to create an industry leading facility that takes access and inclusive design globally to a new level. The Highline team will work with local disabled and older people and local representative groups, the council and experts around developing this goal and to create a facility for Camden that truly is for all. Being retrofitted to existing infrastructure, each site along the Highline will raise specific access issues, with each being approached using the same accessible inclusive design ethos, aiming to develop a uniformity of experience within the limitations of each site.

Conclusion

"Having examined the designs as of Feb 2022, the Mik Scarlet Access view is that the Camden Highline, as currently proposed, is an accessible proposal and an inclusive design"

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