

Phoenix Theatre Access Statement

The Phoenix Theatre is a Grade II listed building located in London's West End. There are a number of challenges that face the building in terms of accessibility, primarily owing to its age and listed status. At present, the step free entrance is located via an alleyway, the only wheelchair space available often provides a restricted view at best and the accessible toilet facilities do not comply with current building regulations. Furthermore, there are no lowered counters available at any sales points, nor do these sales points have hearing loops installed. The auditorium hearing enhancement system is declining and will soon need to be replaced.

An Access Review was conducted in December 2018 by David Owen from Nick Goss Consultancy Ltd., where a number of suggestions for improving the building's accessibility were made. The full report may be made available upon request.

Taking into account the Equality Act 2010, the BS 8300: 2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment and Approved Document M: Access to and use of buildings, if the building were to undergo any renovations then improvements to its physical accessibility must be considered. The main recommendations would be:

1. To increase the number of wheelchair spaces available for patrons in the auditorium. The Building Regulations recommend that a minimum of 1% of the venue's capacity should be wheelchair seating. Therefore, with a current capacity of 1012 this would need to increase to 11 spaces. Consideration must also be made to evacuation procedures and nearby toilet facilities as well as where possible offering a range of sightlines.
2. To improve the wheelchair accessible toilet in the following ways:
 - a. Increase its size, as currently most wheelchair users would struggle to manoeuvre this space.
 - b. Improve the colour contrast between grab rails and walls.
 - c. Locate an alarm reset button inside the facility.
3. To improve the step free route from the street outside to the auditorium and other theatre spaces, including the accessible toilet. Currently the doorways and corridors are narrower than building regulations dictate, which could lead to structural damage if a wheelchair user were to attempt to navigate these routes in a chair that was too large.
4. Increase the colour contrast between the auditorium seating and carpet, as the current colour scheme will cause some people with a visual impairment to struggle to identify the seats.
5. To improve the hearing enhancement system in the auditorium.
6. To install hearing loops at all points of sale.
7. To make at least one bar space step-free.
8. To make the Ambassador Lounge step-free, or if not possible, to ensure that a similar experience is offered as a reasonable adjustment.

The venue's greatest asset is its staff, who are able to make reasonable adjustments in order to support customers with access requirements. Access Awareness Training is offered to all staff to allow the best possible experience for our customers. The venue is accessible in other ways; there is an infra-red hearing enhancement system in the auditorium, which can be accessed via an in-ear headset or necklace to connect to a customer's hearing aid, provided they have a working 'T' function on their aid. Staff are able to guide customers with a visual impairment to their seats and assistance dogs are welcome in the venue. Considering the passion shown by venue staff in terms of access, it would be a pity to overlook the potential physical changes to the building in the event of major structural renovations.