

FORMER TRADE UNION BUILDING

ACCESS & SERVICING STRATEGY IN SUPPORT OF CHANGE OF USE APPLICATION

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1. Introduction

This Access Statement has been prepared by Antonio Garcia Architecture Ltd on behalf of DBL & should be read in conjunction with the application drawings.

The statement is designed to highlight the access and servicing strategy, which meet the needs of all users including disabled people, promoting a high quality and inclusive environment for all, irrespective of age, gender, mobility or impairment and to enable the needs of disabled people to be taken into account, at the earliest stages of planning a development.

By doing so this document assists the processes laid out in the social model of disability, and aims to be both positive and inclusive in its approach.

Access statements are required for planning permission in accordance with Section 42 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. 'Planning and Access for Disabled People - A good practice guide' suggests that an access statement should identify the philosophy and approach to inclusive design, adopted within the proposal put in for Planning Consent. It requires the identification of key issues of the scheme, and the sources of advice and guidance used to determine the design.

This Access Statement supports an application for change of use to the Trade Union Building, Liverpool. It illustrates excellent accessibility for disabled people without the need for intrusive design changes to what is a Grade 2 listed building. It demonstrates that the recommendations contained within BS8300:2009 and the Approved Document M; Building Regulations 2000 can be achieved.

The physical barriers often presented by the built environment can severely restrict the mobility of many people. They often make it difficult, if not impossible for disabled people to gain access to jobs, services, housing and entertainment.

Government has set out an ambitious vision – that by 2025 disabled people should have full opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life, will be respected and included as equal members of society. (Office for Disability Issues (ODI) www.odi.gov.uk)

This document complements a central objective of Government policy, namely the creation of an inclusive society and this means social, economic and physical inclusion. The ultimate goal is a modern, cohesive society in which all members of the community are included in everything that they do.

2. Legislation

Society's views on disability have changed a great deal over the last few decades. For example, it is becoming much more common for disability to be seen in a social context rather than as purely a medical problem affecting the disabled person. Viewing disability as society's concern rather than solely the concern of the disabled person and medical profession has led to an acceptance that society has an obligation to remove barriers to allow and encourage participation by disabled people. This obligation has to a greater or lesser extent been enshrined in legislation to speed the process of full inclusion by disabled people in society. The principal relevant pieces of legislation are outlined below.

The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970

Section 4(1) of the Act requires that "any person undertaking the provision of any building or premises to which the public are to be admitted, whether on payment or otherwise, shall, in the means of access both to and within the building or premises, and in the parking facilities and sanitary conveniences (if any), make provision, in so far as it is in the circumstances practical and reasonable, for the needs of members of the public visiting the building or premises who are disabled."

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 / 2005

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 brought in measures to prevent discrimination against disabled people. The Act, which was amended more recently by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, gives disabled people rights in the areas of:

- Employment Education
- Access to goods, facilities and services
- Transport

It requires employers to make reasonable adjustments to removing barriers allowing disabled people's participation. Providers of goods and services to the public also have a legal duty to take reasonable

steps to remove, alter or provide a reasonable means of avoiding a physical feature of their premises, which makes it unreasonably difficult or impossible for disabled people to make use of their services.

The Equality Act 2010 came into force in October 2010 and replaced the existing DDA and other equality legislations with a single Act. It simplifies the law, removing inconsistencies and making it easier for people to understand and comply with it. It provides a framework for simpler, smarter and more streamlined processes. It also strengthens the DDA in important ways to help tackling the discrimination and inequalities which still exist in our society.

Planning Policy Context

The National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012 sets down the Governments policy for promoting sustainable economic development, which attracts a presumption in favour of grant of planning permission where the proposal is compliant with an up to date development plan, or where policies are either silent or indeterminate.

The relevant planning policy context for the proposed change of uses is set down in the accompanying Planning Statement. It is highlighted in the Planning Statement that the site is located in a highly sustainable location within the city centre where public transport is abundant. The various uses applied for will promote inclusive access and choice for all sectors of the community in line with policies of the NPPF and relevant policies of the Liverpool Unitary Development Plan and the Access for All Supplementary Planning Document.

It is shown on the accompanying application drawings that the site has some minimal challenges in terms of providing wheel chair access to all areas of the building. It also demonstrates that the various commercial uses will be able to be provided such that all sectors of the community will be able to access the proposed uses

3. Inclusive Design

Inclusive Design is a key concept in building design. Accessibility enables people to participate in the social and economic activities for which the built environment is intended.

The concept of inclusive design follows the social model of disability by focusing on removal of the barriers within the environment rather than the impairment. Inclusive design creates an environment where everyone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available to members of society. It aims to remove barriers that create undue effort, separation or special treatment and enables everyone regardless of disability, age or gender to participate equally, confidently and independently in mainstream activities with choice and dignity. In short, inclusive design provides a single solution for everyone.

The proposed development where possible strives to offer inclusivity, it will be safe, predictable, convenient, flexible, sustainable and legible.

The proposed uses seek to offer:

- Equitable use and accessibility for everyone irrespective of ability.
- Appropriate space for people regardless of body size, posture and mobility.
- Ease of use, comprehension and understanding regardless of physical or cognitive abilities.
- A safe, comfortable and healthy environment, minimising hazards.

4. Access & Servicing

(refer to application drawings for detail)

Access to the site

The site is well placed for accessibility via public transport – bus links off Hardman Street & Myrtle Street and City Centre rail links providing excellent links to Universities, hospitals and airport.

The site is accessible from major roads: Hardman Street and Hope Street.

External Access and Servicing within the Site

There are currently 5 access points to the building perimeter including 4 off Hardman Street and 1 off Hope Street.

We are proposing to split the building into 5 distinct zones, each potentially encompassing a different use class.

All building zones link to servicing access from either Hardman Street or Hope Street, these servicing points will include refuse pick up areas. We are not proposing to change the servicing strategy from that which is existing. Level access and DDA compliant ramps will provide access for wheelchair users into each of the 5 building zones.

Access within the Building

Within each building zone all floor levels are fully accessible to wheelchair users via existing lifts or additional existing external access points at basement level.

Unit 4 does not provide wheelchair accessibility to the second floor and upper ground floor plan, however these areas only equate to a small percentage of the overall unit area and will more than likely be used as ancillary spaces.

5. Revision A

Response to LCC Comments- email from Anne-Marie Piedot, 30 August 2012

Access within the Building

Whilst designing the access within the building we have referred to the following documents:

- English Heritage's 'Easy Access to Historic Buildings (2004),
- recommendations within BS8300:2009,
- Building Regulations Part M (main source of reference)

Building Regulations Part M, Section 0: General Guidance

Subsection 0.2 states that: “where any building is extended, or undergoes a material alteration, the building work must be carried out so that after it has been completed the building complies with the applicable requirements of Schedule 1, or, where it did not fully comply with any applicable requirement, it is no more unsatisfactory than before.”

Building Regulations Part M also sets the requirements and recommendations for inclusive design in respect of historic buildings and change of use of the buildings.

Material Changes of Use:

Subsections 0.09 to 0.12 relate to the material alterations and material change of use of buildings.

Subsection 0.9 states: “where an alteration of a non-domestic building is a material alteration, the work itself must comply, where relevant, with requirement M1 (...) Reasonable provision must be made for people to gain access to and to use new or altered sanitary conveniences. The building as a whole, including access to it from the site boundary (...) must be no less compliant with Requirement M1 following a material alteration of a building.”

0.10 “where there is a material change of use (...) the building must be upgraded, if necessary, so as to comply with M1 (Access and use)”

Historic Buildings:

Subsection 0.18 states: “The need to conserve the special characteristics of such historic buildings must be recognised.” and that “...the aim should be to improve accessibility where and to extent that it is practically possible, always provided that the work does not prejudice the character of the historic building...”

The same point recommends finding an appropriate balance between conservation and accessibility.

The application proposes full level access to the principle areas, facilities, entrances and sanitary provisions. Notwithstanding this there are several secondary areas that are not fully accessible but constitute a small percentage of the overall building floor area (as previously stated).

In summary, the submitted proposals improve accessibility within the Grade II listed building where practicable and that providing full access would have a detrimental impact on the historic features of the building. Each of the issues raised by Liverpool City Councils Access Officer are addressed further in this section.

Please note that future tenants of the building will also have to meet their statutory obligations as defined in current DDA legislation.

Basement

There is one C1 compartment within Unit 4 which is not fully accessible. This area is accessed via existing internal stairs and constitutes ca 6% of total floor area of the Unit 4 at basement level. Provision of internal or external 'level access' is considered not possible without adversely affecting the historic nature of the building.

Lower Ground Floor and Ground Floor

Two compartments at Unit 4, C1 use, are accessed via existing internal staircases. These are secondary ancillary spaces that constitute only ca 12% of general Unit 4 area at Lower Ground Floor and Ground Floor. The provision of ramped access to these areas is

considered not possible without detrimentally impacting on the historic quality and layout of the central feature.

Unit 3 is accessible via existing external concrete ramp of gradient ca 1 in 11, 5m long. This ramp can be upgraded if necessary or retained as “no more unsatisfactory than before”. A compliant internal circulation will be provided by the operator in accordance with DDA requirements as indicated on the relevant drawing.



Fig. 1.

existing external ramp

Upper Ground Floor

There are two compartments (C1 use) accessed via internal staircases. These are secondary spaces that form ca 12% of total Unit 4 area at Ground Floor. The provision of ramped access to these two compartments is considered not possible without adversely affecting the historic layout of the central feature.

Lower and Upper First Floor

Unit 5 is fully accessible by existing dual aspect lift located in the corner between Unit 4 and Unit 5. The lift has a large car with clear opening of 800 mm both sides.



Fig. 2.

lift, view from Unit 5



Fig. 3.

lift, view from Unit 4

Second Floor

The second floor is an ancillary area of Unit 4 which is not fully accessible. The provision of level or ramped access to this area is considered not possible without adversely affecting the historical appearance and character of this part of the building.