

Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment

An illustrated journey through an accessible environment



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contents

foreword by the Mayor	1
the journey	3
parking	4
transport links	5
approach	7
entrance	11
reception	17
circulation	18
toilets	28
fire escape	30
building types	32
housing	33
libraries	35
places of worship	37
shops and restaurants	39
education	42
culture and the arts	43
leisure and sports	48
the public realm	50
access to the countryside	52

foreword by the Mayor

My vision is to create an environment in London in which all people have equal, easy and dignified access to London's buildings, places and spaces. I am committed to London becoming accessible and inclusive as befits a World City.

Disabled people in particular continue to be excluded from much of our built environment through inaccessible design, poor management and inadequate information. One of the objectives of the London Plan is to build a London that is more accessible to disabled people. The London Plan sets out a framework and policies for achieving the highest standards of safe, easy and inclusive access for all people, regardless of disability, age or gender. Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) to the London Plan called 'Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment' published in April 2004 provides detailed guidance on these London Plan policies, it can be viewed on the GLA website: www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/accessible_london.jsp.

The introduction of the final provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 in October 2004 has ensured that many service providers have reviewed how they provide their service to disabled people. As a result there are now some good examples of buildings in London where access for disabled people has been improved. Providing information on these buildings can help inspire others to undertake similar improvements.

A number of photographic examples of building elements have therefore been illustrated in this document with the aim of inspiring developers, designers, and planners; helping to supplement the advice given in the SPG and assisting in implementing the London Plan policies on inclusive design. As no building is perfect selected elements from a number of different buildings have been chosen which have been well designed, are a pleasure to use, that lift the spirit and are accessible to all users. The examples have been set out in design guide format to illustrate a virtual journey through an environment. The aim is to demonstrate that access improvements need not be utilitarian or obtrusive.



© Lianne Harris

Although we have a long way to go before London's built environment is designed, built and managed in a way that gives us all the same opportunities, these examples should inspire others to provide inclusive access for all. This inclusive approach helps to eliminate discrimination and contributes towards the creation of an accessible and inclusive City.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ken Livingstone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'K' and a long, sweeping underline.

Ken Livingstone
Mayor of London

the journey

- parking
- transport links
- approach
- entrance
- reception
- circulation
- toilets
- fire escape

parking

Laban Dance Centre

Designated parking bays to the rear of the site are marked out in bold yellow paint on the smooth black tarmac. A protected pedestrian route is also marked out between the bays and the entrance to the building, further protected by a row of bollards.



Aspire National Training Centre

All facilities within the centre are designed to be accessible to all. However, it has been recognised, not least because public transport links are poor, that designated parking bays are essential. These are located close to the entrance, the route to which is covered and well lit.

transport links

Turnpike Lane Bus Station

Crossings are controlled, provided with dropped kerbs, flush with the road and highlighted with red blistered tactile paving.



Wimbledon Station

There is a passenger lift from street level to the concourse and individual passenger lifts from the concourse to each pair of platforms including tram, mainline and underground services.

However, there is level access from the platform, only to tram carriages, and the pedestrian environment outside the station is poor, with unmarked chamfered steps across the pavement.





Stratford Interchange

Connections between underground, mainline trains, buses and taxis are level and/or provided with passenger lifts.

Signage is bold and erected within circulation areas without presenting any obstruction or tripping hazard.

approach

National Portrait Gallery

A new masonry ramp has been created to blend in monumental style with its surroundings. The gradient of the ramp conforms to the provisions set out in the Approved Document M (1999). However, the outer handrail is mounted on top of the parapet (less easy to reach than one that projects into the walkway) and both are higher than is recommended. There is no directional signage to this entrance from Charing Cross Road and the doors at the head of the ramp are very heavy to open.



Kinaird House

A classical frontage beside the National Gallery. An elegant glass ramp has been installed spanning the light well to the right of the main entrance portico. The top landing is shared by the short flight of steps rising from the pavement. The ramp floor of thick frosted glass is ribbed with steel strips but it is unclear whether these strips would provide sufficient grip in wet/freezing conditions. Unfortunately the handrails are again mounted above the height recommended by the Approved Document M (1999).



British Museum

A level entrance is available on the north side of the museum but to the south a ceremonial flight of steps lead to the imposing classical entrance. A discrete external platform lift has been installed to one side of that flight, which can be operated swiftly and independently.



The LSO at St Lukes

A Grade 1 listed church (abandoned for many years and in poor state of repair) has been converted to provide a home for the London Symphony Orchestra's community and music education programme LSO Discovery.



Somerset House

From the public courtyard, a curved shallow ramp spans the light well to overcome the change of level to Somerset House.



CUE Centre – Horniman Museum

This building has been designed to demonstrate a number of established and experimental environmentally sound design techniques.

It has from the outset been designed to provide access for all with a ramped approach constructed from timber obtained from English softwood renewable sources.

entrance

McKenzie Practice

This conversion of a laundry to a private health centre was the winner of an Islington Access Award in 2002. Level access is provided into the clinic, a small shop front, opening directly from the edge of the pavement. Previously the entrance was served by steps.



IKON office solutions

Although this is an alternative accessible entrance, it is more prominent than the stepped 'main' entrance. The door opens automatically, triggered by the receptionist who can see the caller and whose attention is summoned via an entry phone. To avoid obstructing the pavement, a shallow ramp rises internally to the main reception area.





Somerset House

From the Embankment a bespoke platform lift has been installed within a subsidiary arch, beneath the vaulted roof, to the main reception area. The lift can be operated independently.

Royal Court

New doors have been installed to one side of the foyer, to match those on the face of the building and in keeping with the age and style of the building. However, these are fitted with a mechanism that reduces their opening weight. An initial pull triggers a counterweight mechanism, the remainder of the action requiring no further human effort.



Horniman Museum

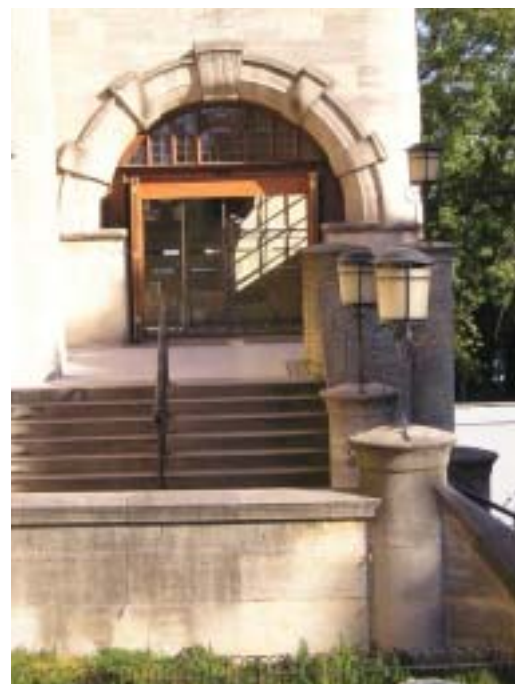
The original building presents a beautiful and highly decorated Art Nouveau elevation to the street. The entrance was however several metres above pavement level.



The extension of the museum presented a radical opportunity to turn the whole building around to provide a new inclusive level entrance; leaving the historic elevation untouched.

The new building echoes the form and massing of the original but is executed in contemporary style.

The redevelopment of the site was conceived and pursued with the assistance of an access consultant.





Peter Jones, Sloane Square

Originally every entrance to the store was provided with two sets of heavy double doors into a lobby, another two sets on the far side and a further two sets only 1m beyond. The arrangement created difficulties for many users including parents with buggies and elderly people.

At the Sloane Square and Cadogan Gardens' entrances, detailed negotiations with English Heritage agreed to automatic, glazed swing doors, either side of a single deep lobby as a more accessible and elegant design solution.

Oh Arts Centre

The entrance to the centre displays a bold use of colour that continues within. The scheme was developed on the basis of advice provided by a visually impaired artist and colour consultant. The entrance is recessed/discrete in response to the needs expressed by local women of Asian origin.



Waterstones, Piccadilly

A discrete platform lift has been worked into a flight of Art Deco steps at the main entrance to the largest bookstore in town.



Almeida Theatre

The theatre has been refurbished to improve access for all visitors; the original building was cramped and poorly laid out with many changes of level. The new entrance has level access across the threshold and is recessed to provide sufficient space for wheelchair users turning to leave or enter the building. Swing doors are provided in addition and adjacent to a single powered sliding door, providing a generous clear opening width. So all visitors effectively use the same entrance.



reception

Horniman Museum

The low level reception desk provides easy open access for wheelchair users and children, an induction loop is fitted and portable systems made available for occasional use at other visitor service points.



Peckham Library

At ground floor level there is a reception desk that is circular with service points at a range of different heights. Tinted windows behind serve to some extent to reduce the potential for glare nuisance.



circulation

Circulation includes the treatment of horizontal and vertical routes through a building and the use of colour, tone, lighting and signage to facilitate orientation and way finding.



Wallace Collection

A sign board at reception lists the museum's services and facilities, including those particularly relevant to disabled people. Large, heavy double doors dividing circulation routes are fitted with automatic opening devices. These are activated by hand held remote controls, issued to disabled visitors at reception.

A glass passenger lift has been installed within the turn of an historic stairwell.

Also within the Wallace Collection, new glass doors are fitted with fine sculpted full width horizontal pull bars, providing leverage and clear visual manifestation.



Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

To aid orientation, vertical circulation cores are colour coded.





RADA

The redevelopment of the college links old and new entrances from parallel streets. A series of passenger and platform lifts have been installed and steps designed to be suitable for use by ambulant disabled people.



Handrails designed to conform to the provisions set out in the Approved Document M achieve visual grace.

Southwark Cathedral

The granite floor slabs continue across the platform lift, the effect is visually pleasing and psychologically reassuring.



Guildhall Crypt

A platform lift between the ground and basement levels of the Guildhall is provided with a glass enclosure and is tucked behind the knee of an existing spiral masonry stair.

Within the 13th century vaulted crypt there is another change in level, provided with an open platform lift, designed for independent use.





OH Arts Centre

Oxford House, a multi use Victorian building, has been extended to produce an accessible community arts venue. A Colour Consultant was employed (an artist who has a visual impairment) who produced a 'spice palette' from which bold tonal contrasts were selected to enhance the centre's readability.

Signage is large, clear and lettering contrasts well with its background. Vision panels in the doors are non-standard but nonetheless effective.



A feature is made of the ramp from ground to basement level; providing access for all users. A range of different flooring materials have been used to assist with way finding and to heighten the acoustic experience of the building for people with sensory impairments. Handrails are provided to both sides of all steps and ramps and step nosings are highlighted to distinguish between individual risers and treads.

Good levels of natural light have been achieved in the reception area, along ramps and on stairways.

Passenger lifts serve every level. The lifts conform to the minimum provisions set out in the Approved Document M but require users to turn through 90° to exit. The car size is insufficient for many wheelchair users to accomplish this manoeuvre.





LSO St Luke's

A Grade 1 listed church (abandoned for many years and in poor state of repair) has been converted to provide a home for the London Symphony Orchestra's community and music education programme LSO Discovery. Lift access is provided to all parts of the building including the gallery; the lift has been successfully located within the stairwell following extensive negotiations with English Heritage.



Circulation space along the balconies is generous.



At LSO St Luke's signage is provided in the shape of piano 'keys'. Each sign sounds a different note when struck, a novel wayfinding device and fun for children.

Horniman Museum

Signage throughout the building employs a series of simple symbols, however, lower case lettering would have been more accessible to people with visual impairments.

Additional freestanding signboards are erected without recourse to projecting supports that present a potential tripping hazard.





Homerton Hospital

A variety of way-finding techniques have been employed including talking signs. These broadcast wayfinding information as building users pass. More complex and specific directions (in a range of languages) can be obtained via the interactive board.

Signs overhead use pictograms to reinforce the written word.





Also at Homerton Hospital bold tonal contrasts are used to enhance the ability of people with visual impairments to read spaces and routes through the hospital are colour coded to assist wayfinding. However, in some places the sheer quantity of information could be confusing.

Great Ormond Street hospital

Departments within the hospital are colour coded; maps, signs and decoration combine to simplify wayfinding and orientation.



toilets

Stratford bus station

For the convenience of all users, baby change and toilets are not combined and bold signs indicate the location of these accessible facilities.



IKON office solutions

A single accessible toilet is provided on the ground floor, beside the passenger lift. The cubicle conforms to the minimum provisions set out in the Approved Document M. However, the cubicle has been fitted with state of the art chrome sanitary ware, a welcome change from the conventional clinical response to 'facilities for the disabled'.



LSO St Luke's

As recommended by BS 8300:2001 toilets suitable for use by ambulant disabled people have been included within the mainstream facilities in this new rehearsal/performance venue located within a eighteenth century church.

At the Aspire National Training Centre all facilities are accessible and unisex. An inclusive approach perhaps but one that raises issues of security and privacy for women. Conversely at the Lee Valley Riding Stables the accessible toilets are integrated within the mainstream facilities. Another inclusive approach but one that may create difficulties for disabled users requiring assistance from someone of the opposite sex.



fire escape



Geoffrye Museum

From the café an external ramp snakes down into the garden.

The ramp provides an integral and accentuating feature of the buildings form and rhythm.



Aspire National Training Centre

A ramped escape route for all.



Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

Lift access is now provided to every floor for audiences, players and technicians. Cores are colour coded and refuge points identified and provided with communication aids. In order to accommodate a performance involving 15 wheelchair users, the management had to secure 13 additional refuge points backstage to satisfy the licensing authorities.



building types

- housing
- libraries
- places of worship
- shops and restaurants
- education
- culture and the arts
- leisure and sports
- the public realm
- access to the countryside



housing

Wheelchair accessible housing

Close collaboration between the architect and a housing occupational therapist throughout the design process produced homes that work; one for a disabled man and his wife, another for a large family with disabled child. Parking is provided outside the property with ramped access from the bay to the kerb.



The lift is sited unobtrusively in the hall and travels between landings, rather than between rooms, maximising room space and flexibility of use. A 180° turning space is provided within the ground and first floor circulation spaces.

The ratio between corridor and door widths facilitates an easy 90° turn of a wheelchair. The WC/bathroom and WC/shower rooms are spacious and easy to negotiate in a wheelchair or self propelled shower chair. Radiator controls, switches and sockets are also within easy reach of wheelchair users.





There is a paved patio area in the back garden providing access to the clothes dryer.

Windowsills at 590mm affl on the ground floor provide views out from a seated position.

However, thresholds at front and rear entrances are not level; weather bars present an obstacle to wheelchair users. Also first floor windowsills have been installed at the traditional height, obscuring the view for wheelchair users. And, all windows have awkward and unattractive window winders. Integral and accessible handles/locks would have provided a better solution.

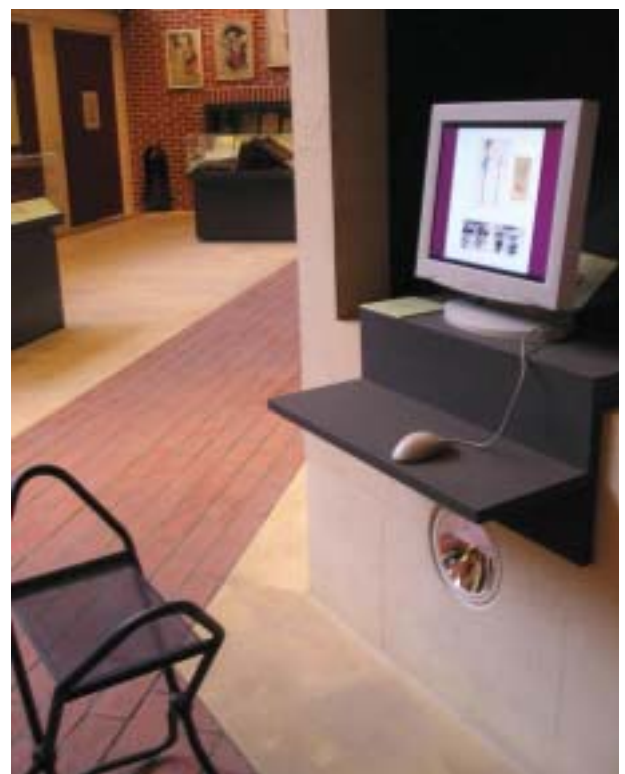
libraries

Women's Library

Display cases and descriptions in the gallery area are mounted at low level. Portable stools are available to enable visitors to rest as they study a particular exhibit.



Interactive information tools are also provided at a low-level and are equipped to meet the needs of the majority of visitors.



Ideas Store

The reception desk and resources are displayed at low level. Reading recesses in the children's area are treated in a contrasting colour. Circulation areas are generous and tonal contrasts bold.



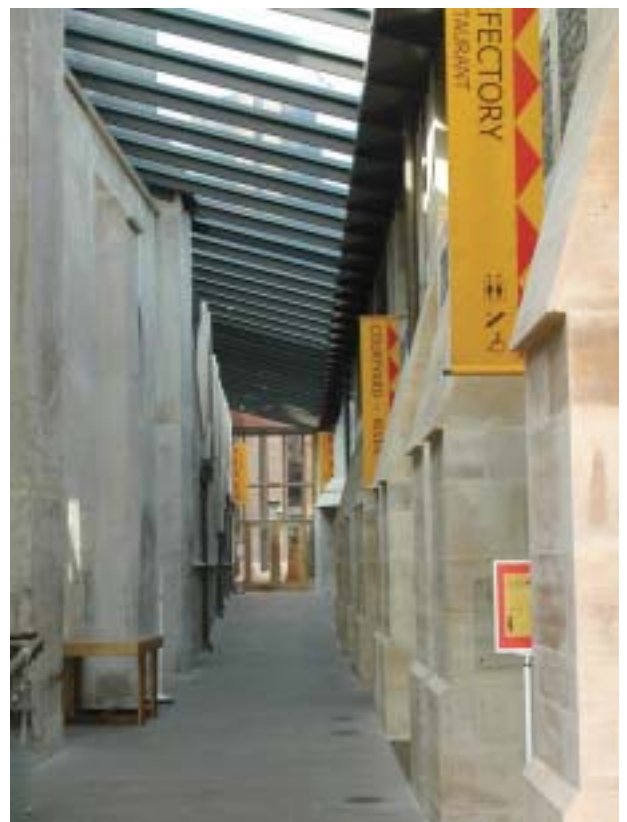
places of worship

Southwark Cathedral

A new build (part refurbishment) wing provides conference rooms, a shop, café, toilets, exhibition centre and an opportunity to view an archaeological site. Lift access is provided between the cathedral and this wing. The cathedral and the new wing can be reached from three different streets, all of which are provided with ramped or level access. The new wing is light, airy and spacious but still designed in keeping with the cathedral.

All conference rooms are provided with lift and stepped access and are fitted with induction loops. The main library and lecture room retain some original features but are also accessible.

The central corridor on the ground floor is gently ramped, finished with the flag stones to match the original.



Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Neasden

This Hindu temple (the largest outside India) has significant numbers of elderly users. It is generally very easy to get round, due in large part to the scale of the building; the entrance is ramped and each level is served by a passenger lift. Accessible toilets are included in both male and female facilities. Access to the shoe changing area, shop and exhibition centre is level and spaces are provided within the prayer hall for wheelchair users.



shops and restaurants

Peter Jones

A recent refurbishment employed the services of an access consultant. Increased circulation widths and resting points have been provided. In every changing room there is a larger cubicle. Each is provided with grab rails, low level hooks and lever action bolts that can be overridden from outside



Jigsaw

The entrance is level and double doors are propped open. Circulation spaces inside are generous and goods are displayed at low level but those shelves are glass. Two changing rooms (accessed directly from the shop floor) are divided by a folding partition, easily demounted to create a single larger cubicle.





Horniman Museum

The gift shop, designed in the main for children and parents with buggies, is spacious and has low-level displays and counters that are similarly accessible to wheelchair users.



Homerton Hospital information shop

An accessible Health Information Shop is provided beside the main reception desk. Circulation around the facility is generous, materials are displayed within reach of wheelchair users and background noise is kept to a minimum.

The café is accessible to wheelchair users, there are numerous wheelchair accessible toilets and the reception desk is provided with two counter levels.

Somerset House

A broad terrace with a view over the river is finished with granite slabs and loose gravel. A raised area of decking is protected from the elements by a lightweight tensile roof. A shallow ramp spans the gravel to provide access to the all weather dining area.



education

Cass Business School

This City and Islington College has been converted to a business school. The college employs a Disability Advisor who was consulted at all stages of the design process.

A platform lift is provided between the green room to podium level (for visiting disabled lecturers) – All teaching rooms have induction loops.



culture and the arts

Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

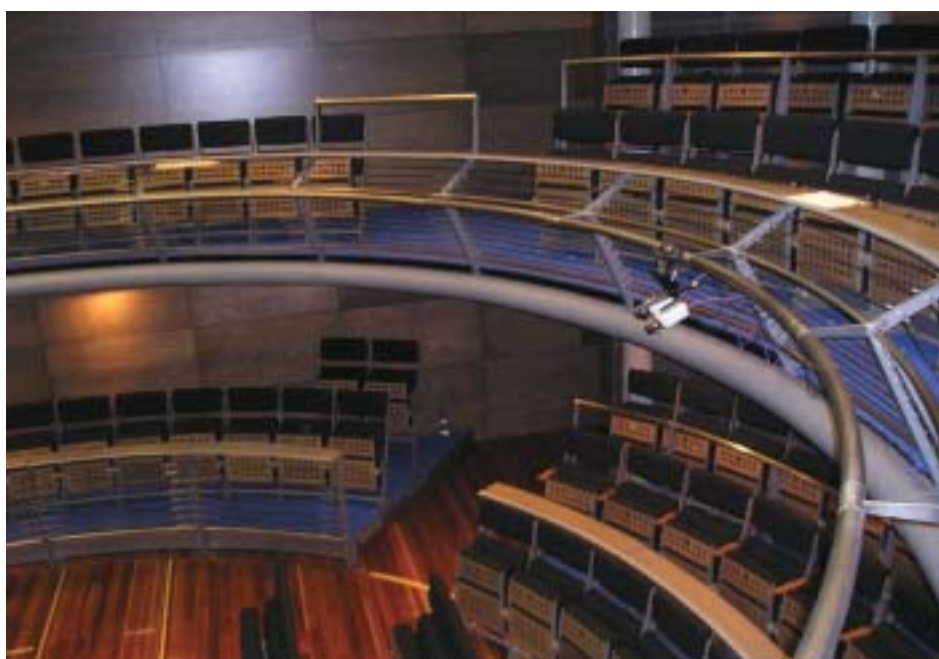
The recent refurbishment and extension employed the services of an access consultant and convened a disabled users group to advise on plans as they developed throughout the process. Lift access is provided to every floor for audiences, players and technicians. Removable seats have been installed within the auditorium at every level, except the stalls. Counters in the interval bars are all provided with a section at a lower level with knee-room beneath.



RADA

Infrared operated aids to communication are installed in each of the three studio theatres and headsets provided for patrons on request.

Lift access is provided to each level of the galleried theatre where any and all seats are easily removable.



National Gallery lecture theatre

The Sainsbury Wing provides an accessible entrance, toilets, lifts and services for the National Gallery. The theatre provides a contemporary venue for lectures and films associated with the Gallery's collections. To the rear of the auditorium there are three spaces available for wheelchair users but a few rows from the front a platform is provided for several wheelchair users and companions. The auditorium is also provided with an induction loop.





Horniman Museum

Display cases and descriptions in the galleries are mounted at low level. Below display cases in some galleries there are also drawers that visitors can pull out to view additional materials.

‘Hands on’ events are organised to provide visitors, including those with visual impairments and/or learning difficulties with the opportunity to touch some of the museum’s exhibits.



In the music gallery there are interactive work benches, provided with loose benches.

LSO St Luke's

As well as rehearsal and performance space this building also contains conference rooms, an education centre, accessible toilets (for wheelchair users and ambulant disabled people) and a café. An access consultant was employed and contributed to all stages of the development.



The LSO has a policy of including the local community in its activities and has opened its rehearsals to them. There are often 200 – 250 people in the audience. All rooms are fitted with infrared sound enhancement systems (headsets are available at the box office). The rehearsal/performance space is very flexible; the stage constructed from a mobile plinth.

The LSO has a children's outreach/ educational programme 'Discovery' that includes disabled children.



leisure and sports

Aspire National Training Centre

The centre has been designed to be fully inclusive; there are no separate/segregated facilities for disabled people, the only exception being the designated accessible parking bays. Passenger lifts serve all floors. There is a ramp into the swimming pool. The sports hall is designed for use by wheelchair users eg wheelchair rugby. The gym equipment is accessible and usable by disabled and non-disabled people; fixed seating can be removed by staff for wheelchair access.



Lee Valley Riding Stables

Level access is provided to all entrances. Doors are powered doors and operated via push pads, mounted on the wall beside or mounted on a 'pole'.

The horse-mounting platform is ramped and is used by many disabled children and adults.



The café and viewing area are accessible, overlooking the indoor training school.



the public realm



Trafalgar Square

The new ceremonial flight of steps is fitted with handrails and contrasting nosings. Two platform lifts have been installed between the National Gallery forecourt and the Square; one that descends to the interior of a coffee shop.



Pavements and thresholds

Rather than erect a ramp the pavement level has been dropped to provide a level entrance to the pub. The objective may have been to improve access for barrels rather than disabled people but the result is clean and effective.

access to the countryside

Lee Valley Park (River Lee Country Park)

Boardwalk through wildflower area with passing places.



Low level tilted information board.





Viewing platform and convenient turning circle.



Bird watching hide with level entrance from boardwalk.

Inside the hide the sill level is dropped and a gap in the bench provided to include wheelchair users.

Gone fishing!

Fishing platforms on the lakeside are accessible to wheelchair users.



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Chinese

中文
如果需要此文檔的您的母語拷貝，
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Vietnamese

Tiếng Việt
Nếu bạn muốn bản sao của tài liệu này bằng
ngôn ngữ của bạn, hãy gọi điện theo số hoặc
liên lạc với địa chỉ dưới đây.

Greek

Αν θα θέλατε ένα αντίγραφο του
παρόντος εγγράφου στη γλώσσα
σας, παρακαλώ να τηλεφωνήσετε
στον αριθμό ή να επικοινωνήσετε
στην παρακάτω διεύθυνση.

Turkish

Bu broşürü Türkçe olarak edinmek
için lütfen aşağıdaki numaraya
telefon edin ya da adrese başvurun.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੀ ਕਾਪੀ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ
ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ ਜਾਂ ਹੇਠ
ਲਿਖੇ ਪਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਰਾਬਤਾ ਕਰੋ:

Hindi

यदि आप इस दस्तावेज़ की प्रति अपनी भाषा में चाहते हैं,
तो कृपया निम्नलिखित नम्बर पर फोन करें अथवा दिये
गये पता पर सम्पर्क करें।

Bengali

আপনি যদি আপনার ভাষায় এই দলিলের প্রতিলিপি
(কপি) চান, তা হলে নীচের ফোন নম্বরে
বা ঠিকানায় অনুগ্রহ করে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Urdu

اگر آپ اس دستاویز کی نقل اپنی زبان میں چاہتے
ہیں، تو براہ کرم نیچے دیئے گئے نمبر پر فون کریں
یا دیئے گئے پتے پر رابطہ قائم کریں۔

Arabic

إذا أردت نسخة من هذه الوثيقة بلغتك، الرجاء
الاتصال برقم الهاتف أو الكتابة الى العنوان
أدناه:

Gujarati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજની નકલ તમારી ભાષામાં
જોઈતી હોય તો, કૃપા કરી આપેલ નંબર ઉપર
ફોન કરો અથવા નીચેના સરનામે સંપર્ક સાધો.

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