makin architecture
URBAN ARCHITECTS & DESIGNERS

Disabled Access Audit

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FOR ACTION

1226 – Amazon House

1.00 **Access to the building.**

1.01 The building adjoins 42 - 44 Sackville Street to the North, and is adjacent to the Origin Development to the South. (Currently on site.)

1.02 To the West, the building faces the Rochdale Canal. There is access to the basement level bar via a bridge, steps and platform over the canal. The external fire escape stair door at ground floor level is above the external floor level of the canal bridge, with no means of access to the lower platform. This access was previously used to take people back into the building after escaping down the external stair, as there is no towpath in this location. The introduction of a bridge to access the basement bar in the 1990's allows people to escape onto Canal Street, and this door is no longer used.

1.03 The existing main entrance is to the east, on Brazil Street. Please refer to point A on drawing E(100). Both sets of original doors are currently retained to this entrance. There are 2 steps to the external door threshold, and a flight of 5 steps internally to reach ground floor level.

Due to the outward opening of the lobby doors it is not possible to accommodate a stair lift in this area. A stair-lift to negotiate the external steps could not be accommodated, as there is not enough room for it to fold away. It would also detrimentally affect the exterior of the listed building.
The change of level between street and entrance wall is 1350mm. A ramp of a gradient of 1:20 would need to be 29.4 metres long and a ramp at 1:15 22.65 meters long. The entrance hall, including the steps within the lobby is 6.2metres x 2.5 metres. The full length of the building is only 26.5 metres, therefore the ramp can clearly not be accommodated within the building. The ramp could not be accommodated in the street without obstructing the fire escape to the basement bar.

The entrance steps are original to the building, and removing them would be undesirable from a listed building point of view. Removing the stairs would impact on the occupied basement unit. It would also not be possible to accommodate a platform lift along with a staircase due to limited width. Therefore all visitors and occupants of the building would be required to enter using the platform lift.

1.04 The window opening adjacent to the main entrance is just above ground floor level approx 1350mm above street level. Although it would be technically possible to alter this window and opening Eden, the existing basement tenant, occupies the space beneath the window opening, making it not possible to amend the window to provide level access. A new opening in this location would also result in alterations to the original window changing the character of the Listed Building.
Please refer to point B on drawing E(100).

1.05 The adjacent window opening has been altered to provide a fire escape for the basement tenant.
Please refer to point C on drawing E(100).

1.06 The loading bay accommodates the boiler house and is required for maintenance access and goods delivery. This costly and intrusive alteration will in any case only allow full disabled access to the ground floor.
Please refer to point D on drawing E(100).
It would be physically possible to break through from the loading bay to the ground floor unit to the rear of the loading bay, but this would obstruct access to the boiler house.
Making an opening further forward would result in the remnants of the original staircase, and original internal windows being removed. We propose to retain these features.
It would be problematic to relocate goods delivery and maintenance access within the building, as the loading bay is the obvious location for this.

2.00 **Access within the building.**

2.01 The goods lift: It would be physically possible to convert the goods lift into a lift compliant with Design for Access 2, however it would be necessary to provide a fire protected lobby on each floor.
Approx 70% of the building's office suites are occupied with long-term leases in place. It would not be possible to change the circulation areas in these occupied floors for this reason. Furthermore it would be a fire and security risk to utilise the existing goods lift and allow it to open directly into occupied office suites. The current goods lift would not be safe to use for employees. The lift could be made accessible from street level as it would impact on the existing basement tenant.
It is our understanding that the current goods lift is original as installed. The lift is currently used to move furniture, if a new passenger lift was to be installed it would be less desirable to use it for the moving of goods and equipment because of potential damage. It should also be noted that the lift arrives at the original floor levels but that overflooring, to take out irregularities, means that there is a step at each level. This poses no great problem for the occasional moving of a sack truck, or similar, but would need an expensive modification to accommodate disabled users.

2.02 Existing passenger lift: The existing lift measures 870(a) x 920(w)mm, with a door opening of 870mm. The door width could accommodate a wheelchair, however, it is the depth that limits the lift to ambulant disabled use only.
The existing passenger lift is as large as is possible whilst accommodating required mechanism and, sitting within the confines of the existing original staircase well.
Increasing the size of the lift would result in removing the staircase. It would not be possible to accommodate a new staircase elsewhere in the building, as it would conflict with existing tenants occupation.