Beach Bar – Disabled Access

Overview

The management of the bar are seeking to reinforce their commitment to wheel chair based bar users in all their venues, not just this new temporary venue. This policy is in line with the City Council's revised Aims and Objectives set out the intention to develop and sustain a healthy, safe, and attractive local environment which contributes to the city's and its people's economic and social well-being.

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We have considered the project using the following documents;

1. Council's Disability Design Standards
2. Building Regulations Approved Document Part M (2004)
3. British Standards BS8300, Access for Disabled People
4. "Building Sight", RNIB 1999.

Generally when designing an inclusive space we would consider the overall philosophy that is to generate acceptance and understanding. Designing a facility that is inclusive is essential. Key to the scheme is the ability of everyone to be able to use it easily including;

1. carers, parents and toddlers,
2. elderly people,
3. disabled people,
4. young people

Obviously when considering a bar the needs are more focused for the later two, during the day the space will allow children when accompanied by family members, and the music that is presented is attractive to people predominantly in their twenties. Whilst the music is an inclusive entertainment, 'high energy' and 'dance' music requires a more youthful approach to design, and management. A balanced and 'one hat suits all' approach would be generate a venue that would not attract or be suitable for the target audience of this bar.

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Proposal

The existing facilities of the square are currently very beneficial to wheel chair users, as the square serves as access for the adjacent new office developments;

There are two main entrances to the venue on an evening (multiple entrances are a security risk for such venues). The approach is across the pavement. There is a dropped pavement adjacent to the entrance, which facilitates people being dropped off from taxis (but the venue is in the city centre).

There is good external lighting from both streetlights and additional lighting is switched on when the venue is open.

The doormen are trained in how to handle wheel chair users at the entrance gates. The doormen will be in contact with all people entering the venue, as they are required to check 'patrons' as they enter the venue for security reasons.

Ground is new high quality pavement that is level and even, so there is no hindrance at this point.

The main floor is a level and smooth surface without obstacles. The lighting is designed for a good overall light, however at the stage end of the site more specialist lighting maybe used in accordance with the entertainment and would not suitable for certain types of sight-restricted users. The venue is a bar, with a performance space and as such loud music, stroking lights in a dark space are the essential qualities that a bar like this offers as an attraction, and to design the venue to be acceptable to all people of all restrictions would in essence turn this space into a venue to listening to records in a tepid environment.

The site is predominatently grassed at the moment, but the design is for the main areas of the site to be either timber decked, or sand pitted. The new surfaces are raised above the adjacent grassed and paved areas, and we have designed a ramp up to these areas. The height difference is on 120mm, so there is no need for guarding, and suitable for ambulant access.

Once up on the raised timber decking wheel chair access is easier than on grass, and the smooth surface will avoid trip hazards for all patrons. There are sand pits, but it is extremely unlikely that a wheel chair user would try and access these areas.

For security reasons it is not practical to have a lowered section of the bar to serve as there could be people accessing the till or the fridges.

Instead the bar staff are trained to be aware of people requiring service from wheel chairs.

The disabled toilet has been designed for a wheel chair user, with handrails, fitment of suitable sink and taps etc.