Chemistry Building, University of Manchester
Proposed Access Improvements (External Ramp)

Design and Access Statement
February 2014

buttressfulleralsopwilliams · architects

CONTENTS

Introduction

Context

Proposals

buttressfulleralsopwilliams · architects
31-33 Princess Street, Manchester, M2 4BF · telephone +44 (0)161 236 3303
Fax +44 (0)161 236 3603 · website: www.bfaw.co.uk · email: contact@bfaw.co.uk

INTRODUCTION

Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams Architects have been commissioned by the University of Manchester to put forward proposals for improved access provisions for ambulant disabled persons and wheelchair users.

This application relates to one of several buildings on the University Campus which are all in close proximity to one another. As such, the proposals have followed a series of detailed considerations on both an individual building basis and also holistically in a site-wide manner (where appropriate). This design and access statement is prepared in conjunction with an application to install handrails to an existing external ramp.

buttressfulleralsopwilliams · architects
31-33 Princess Street, Manchester, M2 4BF · telephone +44 (0)161 236 3303
Fax +44 (0)161 236 3603 · website: www.bfaw.co.uk · email: contact@bfaw.co.uk

CONTEXT

The University of Manchester began life as Owens College in 1851. It was named after John Owens, a Manchester textiles merchant who bequeathed a sum of money in his will for the formation of an educational institution (on the condition that students or teachers were not required to pass any religious tests in order to study or teach there). The original site for the college was in the city centre but in 1873 the institution was relocated to the current Oxford Road site.

The University appointed Alfred Waterhouse to produce proposals for the new site which would eventually form the current Quadrangle and his west range (now known as the John Owens Building) began in 1870. Waterhouse designed all of the other buildings (the Beyer, Whitworth and Christie Buildings and the Manchester Museum) in the Quadrangle although the complex was completed by his son Paul in the early 1900s. The architectural style is referred to in the Pevsner Architectural Guide as 'modern Gothic' and is described as a 'convincing whole in style form and massing'.

The University's main campus was expanded in the latter half of the twentieth century (with developments still presently ongoing) with several buildings (including the Chemistry Building) constructed on the eastern side of Oxford Road. These are still used for the same purpose as their original construction.

In 2004, the Victoria University of Manchester merged with the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) after decades working alongside each other to become one of the largest higher education institutions in the United Kingdom.

buttressfulleralsopwilliams · architects
31-33 Princess Street, Manchester, M2 4BF · telephone +44 (0)161 236 3303
Fax +44 (0)161 236 3603 · website: www.bfaw.co.uk · email: contact@bfaw.co.uk

PROPOSALS

External Ramp Handrails

Under legislation set out in the Equality Act 2010, the University of Manchester are obliged to adopt an approach of 'reasonable adjustment' in order to make their facilities more accessible to all building users. This legislation also extends to listed buildings, although these are protected under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Adjacent to the main entrance to the Chemistry Building is a ramped path running alongside the external café terrace. At present, the ramp is currently unguarded with handrails on both sides. While there is no unguarded drop from the ramp it is technically non-compliant with Approved Document M of the Building Regulations, to which the Equality Act generally refers to. A ramp should have handrails with an upstand on both sides to provide fall protection for both those in wheelchairs and ambulant disabled users. Indeed, the handrails also offer support for users with mobility problems who may be unable to negotiate the ramp freely. As such, in order to ensure the safety of users, and also to safeguard the University against the Equality Act 2010 legislation, there is a requirement for handrails to be installed.

The proposed handrails will match those currently in place on the adjacent café terrace in terms of the handrail and support post profiles. The support posts will be kept to the minimum number required to provide the appropriate level of robustness, and there will be no horizontal wires to the balustrade as detailed on the terrace. This is all designed with the intention to reflect the existing aesthetic and minimize clutter on the main elevation to Brunswick Street.

In terms of access, the proposals by their nature will bring an improvement, by creating a safer route for building users with mobility impairments.

buttressfulleralsopwilliams · architects
31-33 Princess Street, Manchester, M2 4BF · telephone +44 (0)161 236 3303
Fax +44 (0)161 236 3603 · website: www.bfaw.co.uk · email: contact@bfaw.co.uk



The external ramp as existing (viewed from the west), with adjacent handrail design to be re-used as the basis for the proposed installation.

buttressfulleralsopwilliams · architects
31-33 Princess Street, Manchester, M2 4BF · telephone +44 (0)161 236 3303
Fax +44 (0)161 236 3603 · website: www.bfaw.co.uk · email: contact@bfaw.co.uk