



Blacklock

Access Appraisal Statement
22.08.23

*Fretrade Exchange
37 Peter Street
Manchester
M2 5GB*



ARCHITECTURE X INTERIOR

41 South King Street, Manchester, M2 6DE
www.axi.studio
+44 (0)161 879 7357

Company No: 11847325

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1.0 Introduction

This Access Appraisal Statement has been prepared by AXI. The statement acts as a description of the design process to accompany the drawings submitted with this application, the design and access statement, and to demonstrate the thought process behind the access strategy for the unit.

This statement demonstrates that the proposed access strategy has emerged from a full assessment of the site's circumstances and characteristics. This document should be read in support of the separate Planning Statement produced by PBA, Heritage Statement produced by Stephen Levrant Heritage Architecture, and Design and Access Statement produced by AXI, as well as enclosed plan AXI-23-161 SK01

The access strategy is intended to provide a practical, considered and above all inclusive design solution to allow the proposed restaurant to be accessible to all potential users.

2.0 Existing Building and Constraints

The existing building into which the proposed Blacklock restaurant is to be located is a Grade II Listed Building, the significance of which is discussed in detail within the Design & Access and Heritage Statements. Of importance to the access strategy, the headed doorway that is noted in Historic England's Listing will form the main entrance to the unit (see *Figure 1*). This is bounded either side by decorative columns and rusticated vermiculated ashlar stonework.

There is no level threshold to this existing entrance to the unit from Peter Street, though there is an existing level entrance to the entrance from Bootle Street to the north of the building.



Figure 1: Existing Peter Street Entrance

The proposed restaurant unit is to be located on the Lower Ground Floor of the unit. This is largely level and spacious, with internal columns around the central stair core providing some constraint to the layout, but which we have been considered as part of the restaurant proposals.

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3.0 General Access to the Unit

Principal entrances to the Lower Ground Floor are available providing access to the restaurant unit from Peter Street and Bootle Street.

A new entrance door to Peter Street is intended to improve upon the existing glazed door and be more sympathetic to the style of the building. Several options to incorporate access directly from Peter Street for wheelchair users have been explored and these are detailed in Section 4.0 below.

Additional access to the unit is proposed from Bootle Street. A contemporary glazed entrance door has been already installed as part of the landlord's recent works. An existing passenger lift is to be reconfigured to serve for access via a lobby to the Lower Ground Floor from the Bootle Street entrance, in conjunction with the recently refurbished stair to this entrance.

Internally to the unit, the open plan layout to the restaurant provides ample circulation. Corridors within the back of house area are minimal and set out to allow sufficient width for users to access all areas.

Cycle provision in the form of two spaces within the shared cycle store in the Lower Ground Floor has been agreed with the landlord for staff use.

4.0 Inclusive access options

4.1 Entrance from Peter Street

Consideration has been given to various possibilities to alter the existing entrance and stair to enable wheelchair users to access the unit via the Peter Street entrance directly. The following options have been explored for consideration and are shown in the drawing AXI-23-161 SK01:

- Formation of a new access ramp within the door entrance would be a preferable method to enable level access but would have the effect of presenting a large sheltered alcove that would encourage rough sleepers and create a place of concealment unlikely to be acceptable to Greater Manchester Police (*see Figure 2*). The space required for such an internal ramp would be impractical if set behind the existing doorset, intruding into the space required for a platform lift.
- An external ramp has also been considered, which would have a sizable impact on the external thoroughfare and would be an intrusive insertion into the highway (*see Figure 2*). This would likely prove unacceptable to MCC highways, particularly as the entrance is immediately adjacent to an existing crossing point to Southmill Street (*see Figure 3*).

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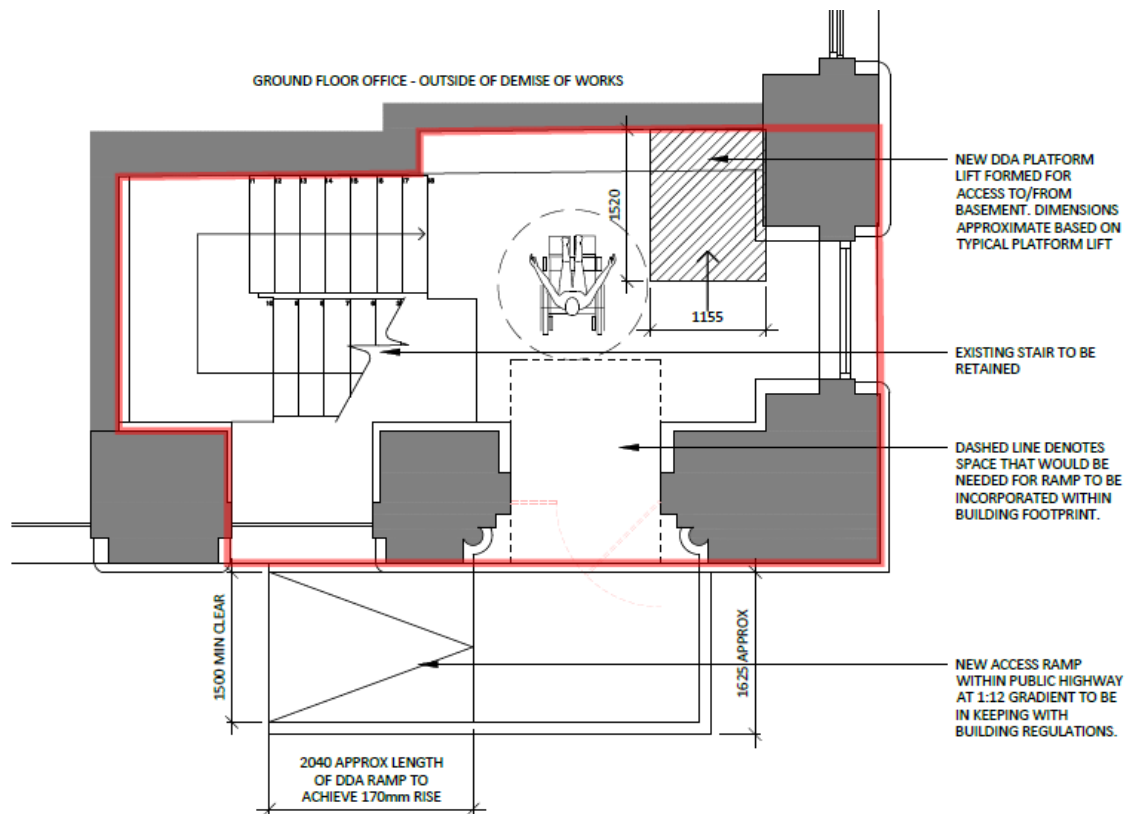


Figure 2: External and internal ramp feasibility options



Figure 3: Peter Street Entrance in Context of Southmill Street Crossing

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- Another suggested option would be to form a level threshold to the entrance, which would entail removing the existing external step (or cutting / sanding it down), as well replacing the existing internal floor and stair in their entirety (Figures 4 & 5). This would have a consequential impact on the existing fabric and structure of the building. Furthermore, a level threshold drain would be required which would need to be channelled through the existing building fabric to connect to the existing internal rainwater drainage.

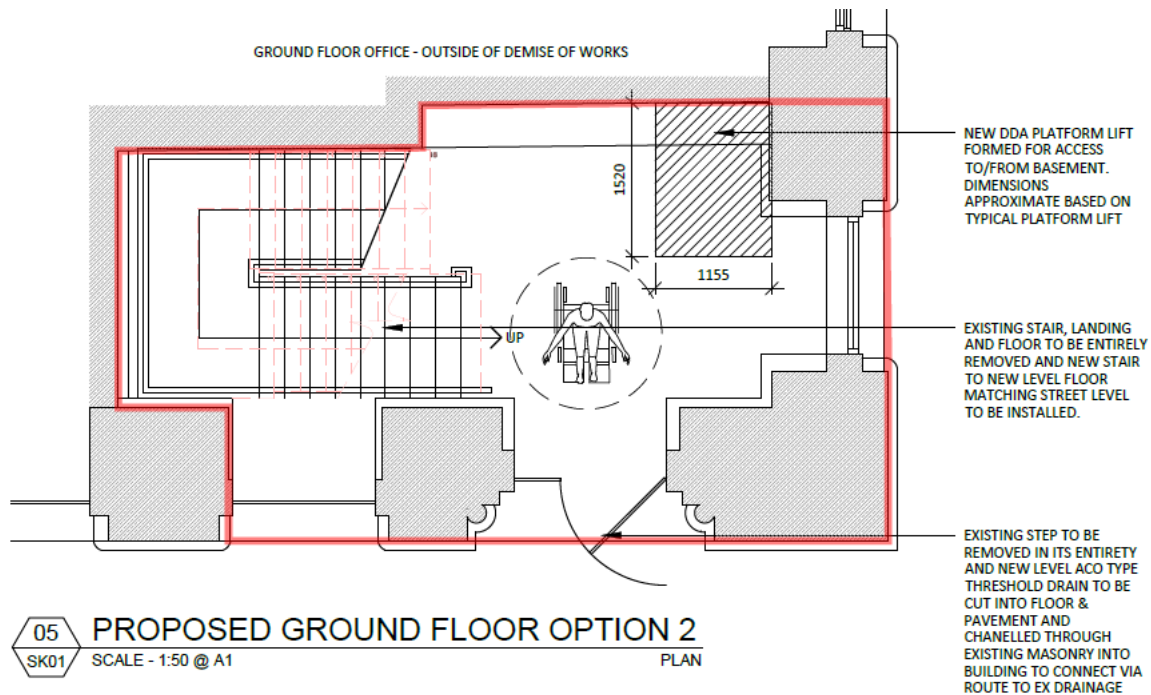


Figure 4: Ground Floor Level Threshold Option

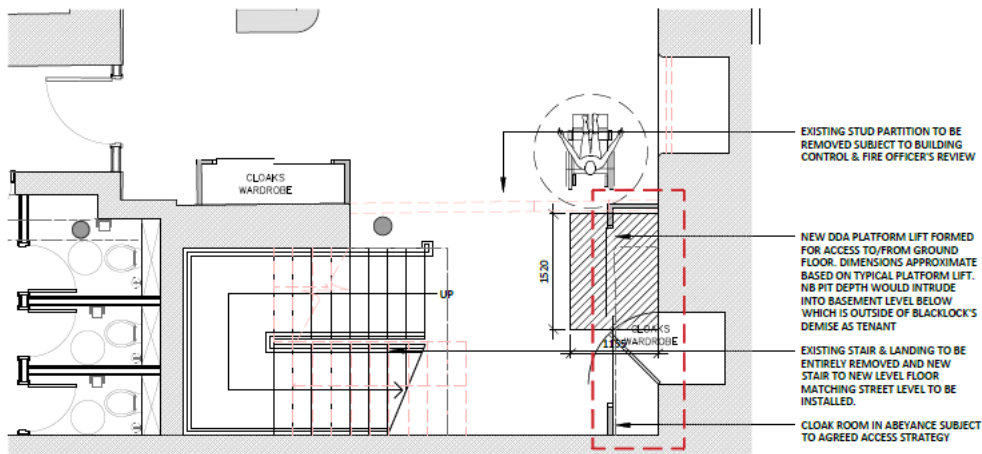


Figure 5: Lower Ground Floor Lift Pit Option

All of the above options would require a new platform lift to be installed within the entrance lobby. The span between the ground and lower ground floor is over 4m, therefore a lift pit of substantial depth would be

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required to be cut into the existing floor between Basement and Lower Ground Floors, which would in turn entail works into the Basement which are outside of Blacklock's demise.

For the above reasons the level threshold option is considered to be too intrusive to the existing building and unfeasible within the scope of the proposed scheme, therefore an alternative access arrangement is proposed from Bootle Street.

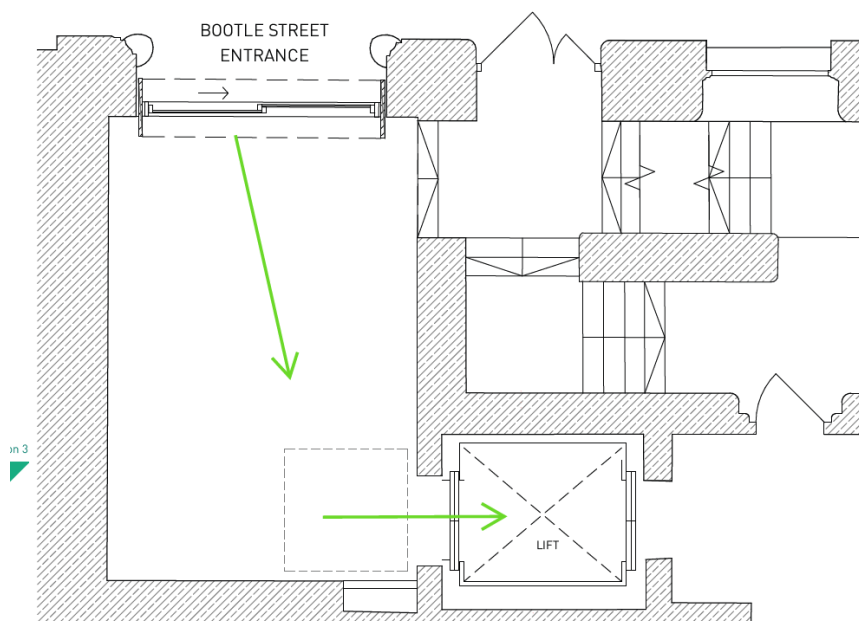
4.2 Entrance from Bootle Street

Additional access to the unit is therefore proposed from Bootle Street. This more contemporary feeling façade features a rendered wall with level access already provided by a recently installed glazed entrance door, which has more than ample width for wheelchair users. In this regard the doors would likely be more convenient for users than the doors to Peter Street.

The Bootle Street entrance is a shared entrance which already provides wheelchair access to the office units on the upper floors. Security is an important concern with regard to other tenants, so it is proposed that the existing fob access will be retained.

A call button directly linked to the host station within the restaurant will be installed to the entrance at Peter Street. Restaurant staff will meet, greet and escort wheelchair users to the Bootle Street entrance, which will maintain security to the upper floors. All staff will be appropriately trained to ensure consideration to all users and that this is not considered a secondary experience.

The access route is straightforward from Bootle Street to the lift at both Ground Floor (*Figure 6*) and Lower Ground Floor (*Figure 7*), with clear wayfinding to be provided within each lobby and on the call buttons of the lift itself.



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR BOOTLE STREET ENTRANCE PLAN

Figure 6: Ground Floor accessible entrance route

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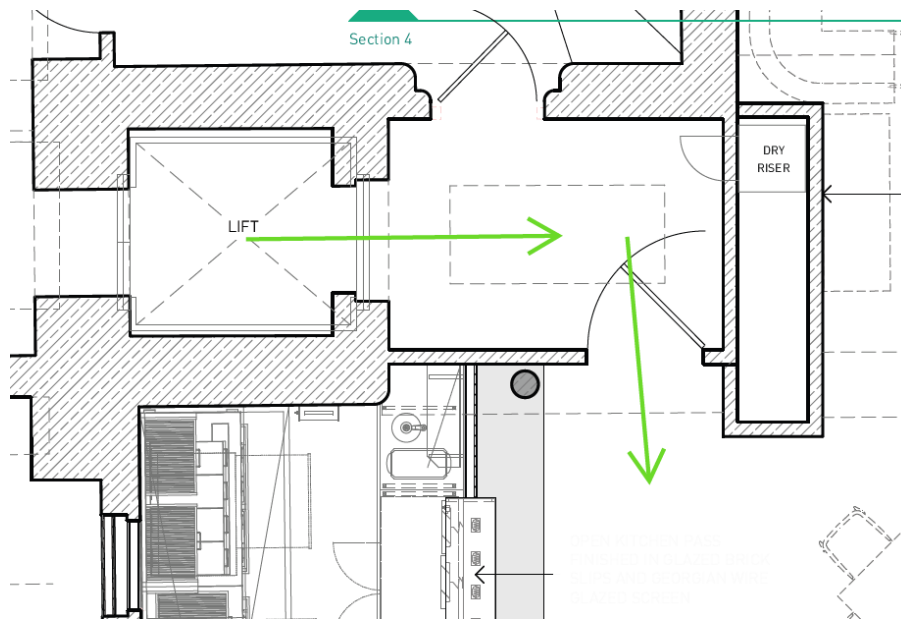


Figure 7: Lower Ground Floor Accessible entrance route

It is important to this proposal that the Bootle Street entrance should not be seen as ‘secondary’ to potential users. In addition to staff training, new signage at this entrance will be considered in consultation with the landlord and signage proposals will form part of a separate Advertising Application in due course. It will be a principle of the management that the entrance lobby and lift will be kept clean and presentable to customers (and office users) at all times. The lift will serve a dual purpose acting for access to and from the bin store at Lower Ground Floor level; collections will be arranged so that these will be outside of opening hours for customers and staff use is limited during opening.

Redevelopment of the area adjacent to Bootle Street is something the applicants are aware of. The St Michael’s development is set to reinvigorate this area and it is entirely plausible that the Bootle Street entrance will eventually see significant footfall which will be an asset to their business they wish to take advantage of.

5.0 Summary

The existing building presents several challenges to access the proposed restaurant on the Lower Ground Floor. Various possibilities have been explored to achieve level access for wheelchair users to the restaurant via the Peter Street entrance. However, considering the potential impacts on the existing building structure, fabric, and surrounding highway, the least intrusive approach to ensuring inclusivity for the unit would be to use the Bootle Street entrance. Considered management by Blacklock will mitigate any negative connotations and ensure a positive experience for all users.

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