



SUPPORTING STATEMENT

RICHMOND HOUSE, BLOOM STREET, MANCHESTER.

- 1.0 EXISTING LAYOUT
- 2.0 THE REQUIREMENT
- 3.0 THE OPTIONS
- 4.0 ALTERNATIVE ACCESS
- 5.0 CONCLUSIONS

ASSESSMENT FOR PROVIDING FULL INCLUSIVE ACCESS FROM BLOOM STREET

1.0 EXISTING LAYOUT

- 1.1 The existing entrance to Richmond House from Bloom Street opens via level access at the threshold into a lobby area some 4250mm by 4500mm O/A.

The lobby area gives onto an accessible lift which provides access to the basement, an ambulant staircase that provides access to the basement, and a staircase that provides access to the ground floor. The ground floor level is some 960mm above lobby/street level. This lobby area is a fire secured area separated from the ground floor trading area by half-hour fire doors and partitions.

- 1.2 The original planning approval, granted in 2006, allowed for the installation of an accessible lift that will provide access to both the basement and the ground floor from the lobby area, stopping at all levels. The works that were subsequently put in place by the then owner, however, did not refer back to the approved layout and provided a lift that only gave access to the basement – not the ground floor.

The premises were subsequently sold to the current owner.

2.0 THE REQUIREMENT

- 2.1 The requirement is to provide access from the lobby area to the ground floor, rising vertically through some 960mm.

3.0 THE OPTIONS

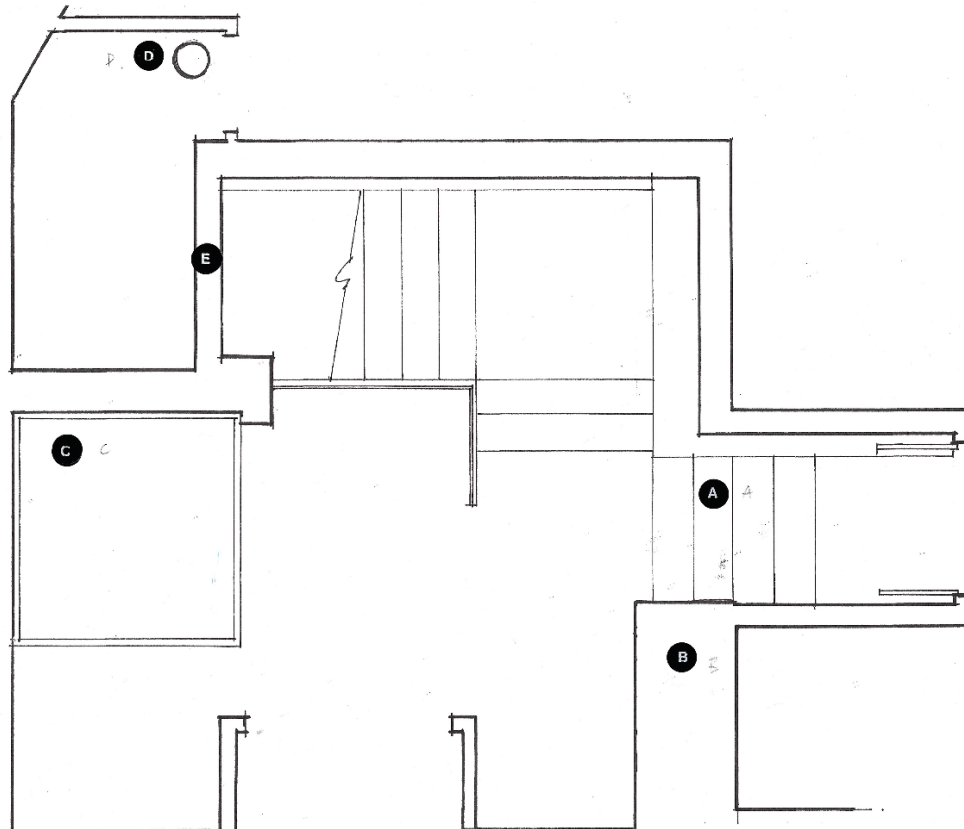


Figure 1. Plan of existing access and stair arrangement with note points added (see below).

3.1 The options to be considered are:

- A. Providing a simple chair lift via the existing access stairs to the ground floor level.
- B. Increasing the width of the current opening to the ground floor level to enable a platform lift to be installed, giving full access to the ground floor.
- C. Adapt the current access lift installation to provide access to the ground floor level.

These are essentially the options available with regard to the current lobby layout. In the event of none of these being viable, then the proposal would be to consider further options to provide full inclusive access (refer to section 4.0).

3.2 OPTION A: INSTALLING A CHAIR LIFT

- 3.2.1 The current unobstructed clearance between wall and handrail on the existing access is some 860mm (Figure 1, Note A).
- 3.2.2 The combined width of the required rail for a chairlift together with the distance from the rail to the wall is 255mm (Figure 1, Note B). This would effectively reduce the unobstructed clearance between handrail and chair rail to 635mm. This width would not comply with the building regulations in terms of safe means of escape.

3.3 OPTION B: INCREASING THE OPENING WIDTH

- 3.3.1 The existing structure has been inspected by a structural engineer who concluded that the opening cannot be increased to the left-hand side – viewed from the lobby, as it compromises the existing stairs to the lower level, and cannot be increased to the right-hand side as it compromises the structural integrity of the external wall (Figure 1, Note B).

3.4 OPTION C: ADAPTING THE EXISTING LIFT

- 3.4.1 The exit from the area to the rear of the lift shaft is compromised by the location of the existing cast iron column to the rear of the existing store room. Access to the left-hand side of the column at its widest point is some 790mm which is well below the required width for wheelchair access and means of escape (Figure 1, Note D).
Additionally, the existing wall (Figure 1, Note E) cannot be relocated further to the right to increase access width as this will reduce headroom over the descending staircase under.
- 3.4.2 Notwithstanding the above, this proposal would not be financially viable in any event as the existing lift was installed post 2006 by the previous owner of the property. The lift was installed by DDA Lifts Ltd, who have advised that they are unable to adapt it to rise through a further 960mm, and it would have to be replaced with a new one. (Figure 1, Note C).

Furthermore, due to the existing configuration of the lobby and the associated stairs, the new opening from the lift enclosure to the ground floor level will require a new structural opening in the wall to the rear of the existing lift enclosure and a new landing across the head of the existing stairs to the basement, together with works to the existing office space to form a lobby and escape corridor and provide fire separation from the staircase forming an escape from the basement via the lobby to the exterior.

The existing lift was custom built for the location. Removal requires A complete dismantling of the installation which could then not be re used.

4.0 **ALTERNATIVE ACCESS**

4.1 PROVIDING A RAMP

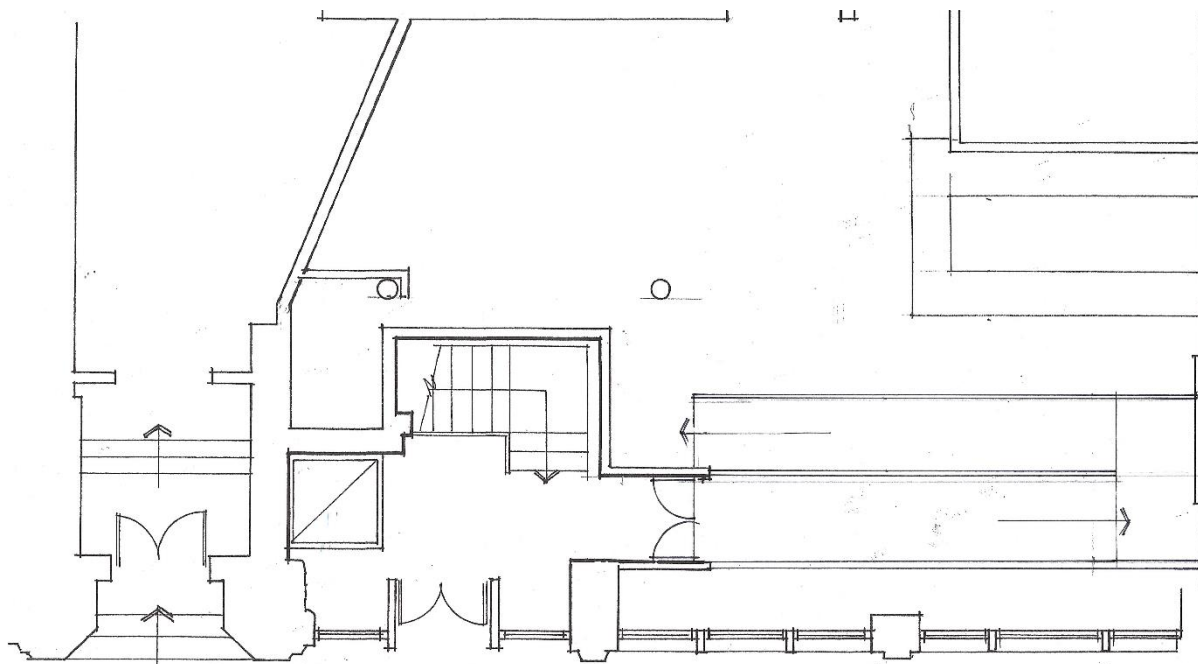


Figure 2. Sketch indicating approximate length of a ramped access and the impact on floor area.

4.1.1 With a compliant gradient of 1:12/1:15, a ramp with a length of of 12m+ would be required including associated landings / turning areas and the required lobby area for fire separation. together with extensive structural work at ground and basement level to support a ramp of this length, this proposal would be both unviable and intrusive.

4.2 PROVIDING A PLATFORM LIFT

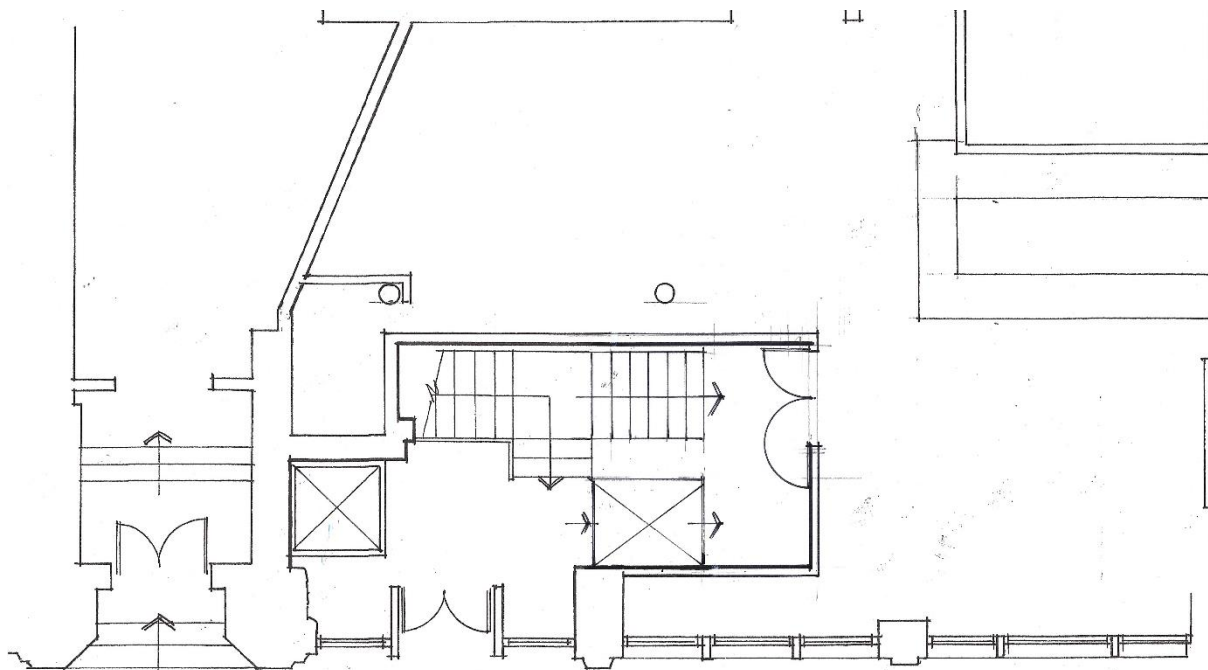


Figure 3. Sketch indicating approximate position of a new platform lift and the impact on floor area.

4.2.1 A platform lift rising 960mm could be accommodated by relocating the existing stairs to rise off the landing to the basement. This would however result in a lobby area some 3m x 3.5m to accommodate exit from the platform and to provide the fire separation required at this point, and again would require substantial structural work at both ground and basement level. This degree of intrusion into the trading area would again prove unviable and invasive.

4.3 ALTERNATIVE PLATFORM LIFT

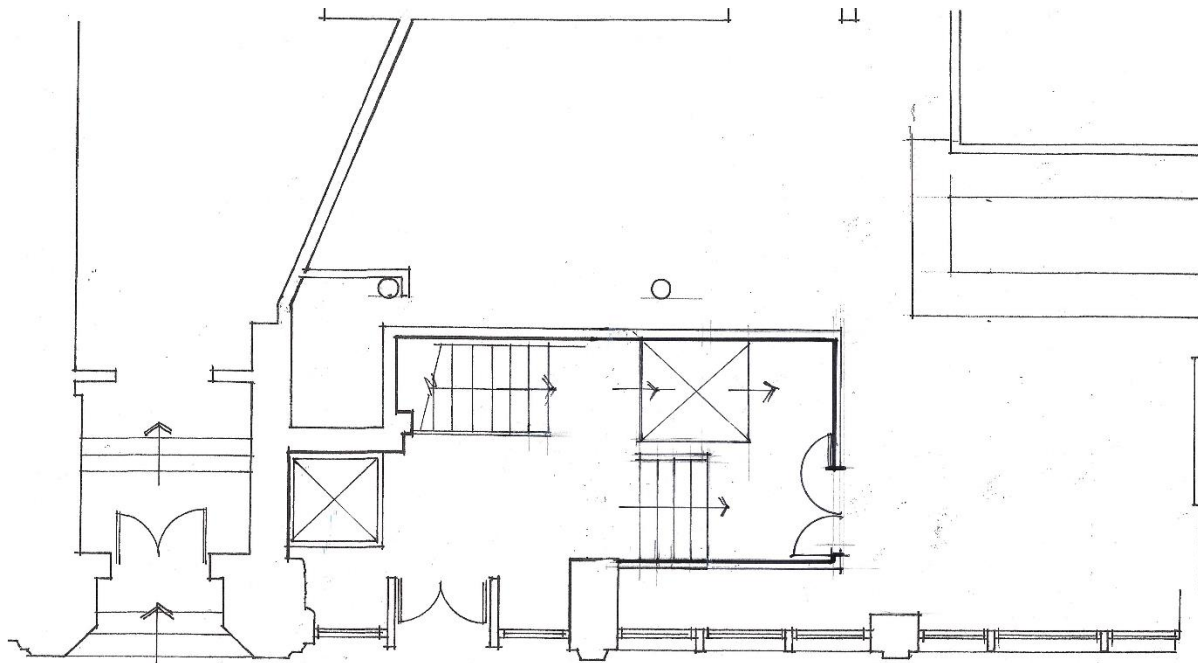


Figure 4. Sketch indicating approximate position of An alternative platform lift and the impact on floor area.

4.3.1 An alternative would be to increase the number of risers to the stairs rising from the basement to provide a level landing at ground floor level from which the platform would rise. This would however compromise the number of risers from the basement increasing them from 16 to 19 and would therefore not comply with the building regulations.

The resulting increase in the lobby area at the trading level would be similar to Plan B above and again prove unviable and invasive.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 This document has been prepared in order to explore alternative options to those submitted and demonstrates that the proposals are the most appropriate method of achieving the objective of inclusive access to a commercial building which is accessible to the public.