

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

The Whitworth Gallery: The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M15 6ER

Provision of safe access to the roof void above the Grand Hall at The Whitworth Gallery

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This statement forms part of an application for listed building consent to provide safe access to the roof void above the Grand Hall at The Whitworth Gallery, Oxford Road.

1.2 The Whitworth Gallery is a gallery housing an extensive and eclectic collection of art and design of international significance. Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, The Whitworth Gallery is Grade II listed. The Whitworth Gallery is shown on the location plan.

1.2 This statement is to be read in conjunction with Drawings 031AA-8504-A001, 031AA-8504-A101 and 031AA-8504-A201, which accompany the application. The drawings show the detail and location of the proposed access works.

2.0 Proposal

2.1 Listed building consent is sought to provide safe access to the roof void above the Grand Hall. Safe access is required in order to maintain the fire alarm system, as there are smoke heads located within the roof void which require a six-monthly inspection.

2.2 The existing access to the roof void is from internal plant space (area outlined in red on drawing 031AA-8504-A001), via a ladder through a square hatch. Photo 1 and Photo 2 in Appendix 1. This arrangement poses a risk of an individual falling when stepping from the ladder to the hatch, and at best means that access is awkward. Drawing 031AA-8504-A101 shows the existing access arrangement.

2.3 A simple solution for safe access would be via a ladder fixed to the wall, however the presence of mechanical plant beneath the access hatch (Photo 1, Appendix 1) means that this is not possible. Spatial restrictions in the area mean that it is not possible to install a set of steps to the hatch.

2.4 It is therefore proposed to install an access platform over the ducting, with edge protection to prevent falling from height. A ladder will give access from the floor to the platform, and a second ladder fixed to the wall will give access from the platform to the hatch. Two grab rails either side of the hatch will facilitate access through it. Drawing 031AA-8504-A201 and Image 3 and Image 4 in Appendix 1 show the proposed access arrangement.

2.5 The two ladders will be constructed from aluminium, and the platform, handrails and grab rails will be constructed from galvanised steel. These materials are in keeping with the existing plantroom environment.

2.6 The access platform will be self-supporting on adjustable rubber feet to prevent damage to the parquet floor. It will be fixed to the brickwork wall using sleeve anchor bolts with 10mm diameter holes. The ladder from the floor to the platform will be fixed to the access platform only, to prevent damage to the floor. The ladder from the platform to the hatch will be fixed to the brickwork wall using sleeve anchor bolts with 10mm diameter holes. The grab rails will be fixed using screws and plugs with 8nr per grab rail (4nr per socket). Image 4 in Appendix 1 shows the fixing details for the proposed access arrangement.

4.0 Assessment of Impact and Mitigation.

4.1 The proposed works - ladders, platform and grab rails, are standard means of access within plant areas, and the proposed materials are in keeping with the plantroom environment. The plantroom itself is not publicly accessible, used only by the maintenance team and Gallery staff.

The proposed works do not impact on the original features of the building and only seek to provide safe access for maintenance of life safety equipment within the building.

The proposed works are confined to the plant room and there are no proposals to change the access to, or circulation within, the building. The works will provide safe maintenance access to the roof void.

Jo Wavish
Projects Team
University of Manchester
14.02.23

Appendix 1



Photo 1. Existing access to roof void.



Photo 2. Existing access to roof void.

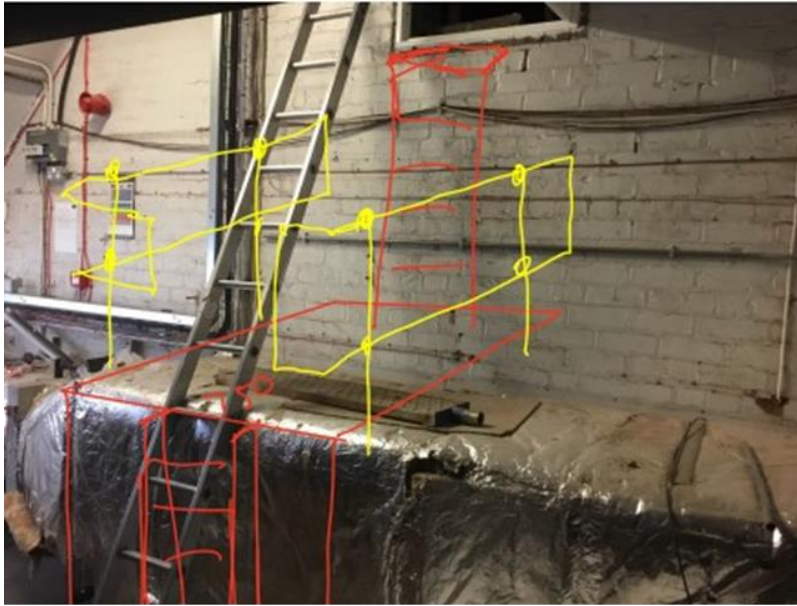


Image 3. Sketch showing proposed access platform, handrails and ladders.

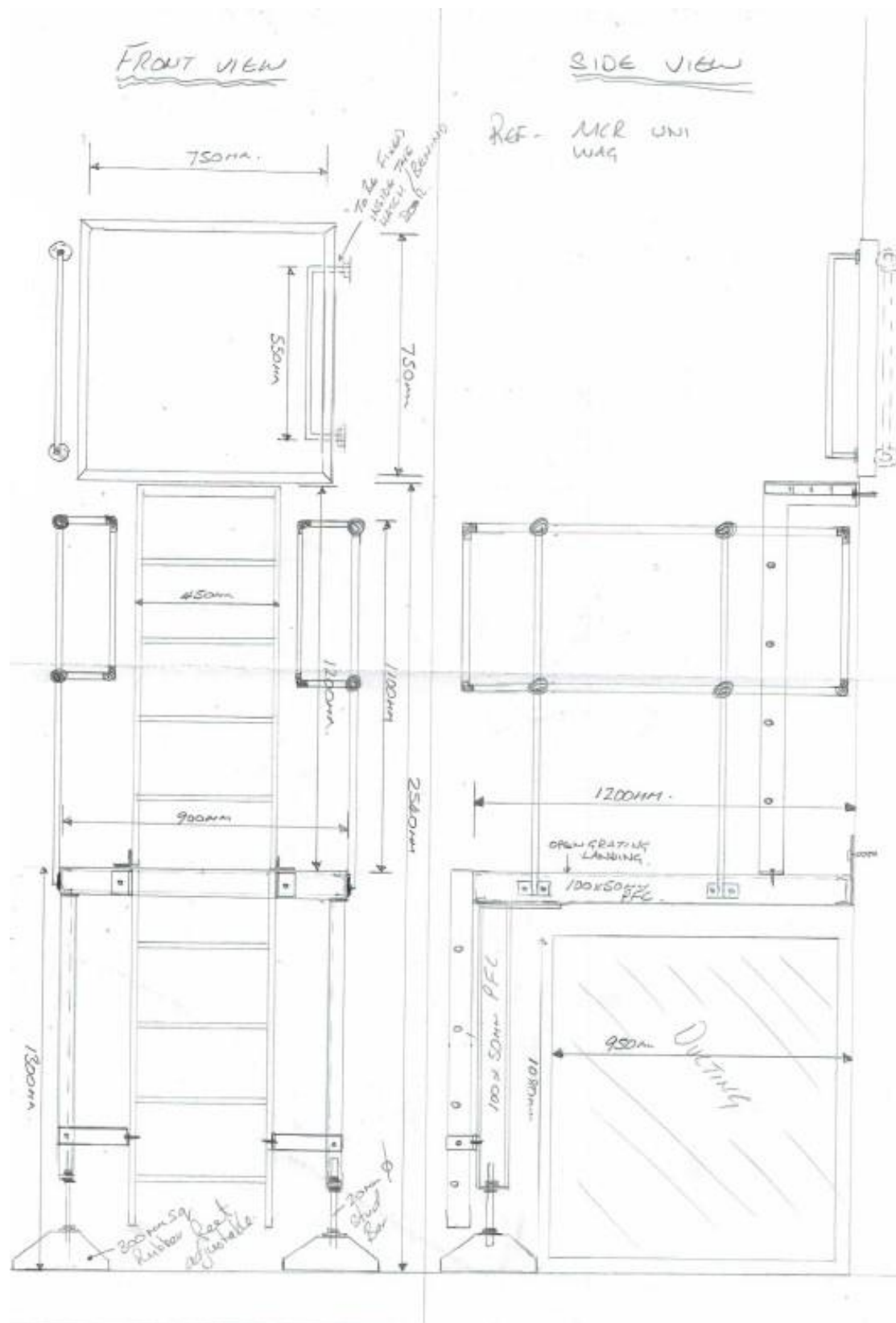


Image 4. Sketch showing proposed access platform, handrails, ladders and grab rails.