

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

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Wythenshawe Park Stables Block, Wythenshawe, M23 0AB



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Changing Places Project

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1.0 – Introduction

This Design Statement has been prepared by Manchester City Council Capital Programmes and Procurement to support an application for Listed Building Consent for the installation of a Changing Places Facility within the former stables block of Wythenshawe Hall, within Wythenshawe Park.

2.0 Features of Existing Site

The Former stable block to the west of Wythenshawe Hall is a Grade II designated heritage asset, protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas) Act 1990. The block was listed on 03.10.74. List Entry Number: 1255038.

The grade II* Wythenshawe Hall sits to the east of its Former Stable Block together they have group value. Both sit within a grade II Registered Park and Garden, which is also subject to statutory protection. These protections are recognition of the site's architectural qualities and historic interest. Wythenshawe stable block & Hall are situated at the Heart of Wythenshawe Park in South Manchester.

This section of the stables is unused save for some obsolete stored office items and is at risk of falling into significant disrepair. The slate roof and cast-iron guttering and downpipes to the rear are already in a state of disrepair and would benefit from remedial works. The stable block has been identified as an accessible location with the benefit of a central location. Significant works were carried out in 2005 to install the current café and toilet facilities. The proposed facility will become a great asset for limited mobility users who are currently unable to enjoy the facility.

Changing places is a national movement which has a set criterion to meet before being awarded changing places status. This gives the user the confidence that their needs will be met. The facility will attract users who can check Changing Places locations via the CP website where every CP facility location is listed.

3.0 Design Proposals

It is proposed to bring the disused room within the former stables back into operation for a Changing Places toilet. Changing Places toilets are larger accessible toilets for severely disabled people, with equipment such as hoists, curtains, adult-sized changing benches and space for carers.

The government aims to add these facilities to more than 150 new buildings a year. In July 2021 DLUHC published the Changing Places Fund Prospectus inviting councils to submit expressions of interest for funding to create new Changing Places Toilet facilities. Following the outcome of the Round 1 assessment process the government has announced that 191 unitary and district councils across England have been allocated £23.5 million of funding to increase the number and spread of Changing Places Toilet facilities across England.

The areas within the building which the Council wishes to bring back into use, are in a dilapidated condition. There are stored materials which require clearing out. There is invasive ivy growing on the rose garden side of the block which requires significantly cutting back and the slates and cast-iron rainwater goods require re-fixing. Due to the overgrown nature, it is unclear whether all gutter sections are still present. The proposal is to replace any missing sections to match existing should they be found to be missing. Slates are to be re-laid locally where they are currently displaced. There is ivy coming through to the interior and trailing down from the roof internally.

The sliding barn door is on a simple runner system with two steel wheels on a single bar track. This has fallen into disrepair with the door only partially opening with a degree of difficulty. It is proposed to hang the barn doors with a new metal heritage style runner system with the runners housed behind the fascia to the top of the doors. There will

be two vertical bands visible, bolted through the timber door. It is proposed to carry out these renovations to both doors, including the door to the other adjacent toilets to give significant more years operational use.

The aim is to build an in-situ freestanding pod type changing places facility within the existing storeroom identified on the drawings. There are to be no fixings into the existing structure in line with the conservation philosophy set out below.

Slate and rainwater repairs are to be carried out to provide weather tightness. The proposal is to use existing materials wherever possible or to match with reclaimed materials wherever possible. Should any new slates or rainwater components be necessary they will be of the same material and design as existing.

Internally brick walls will be lined with new freestanding partition walls with ceilings and a hoist supported by the new structure. It was felt plaster finished walls and ceilings (on plasterboard) would be more fitting than more modern wall linings and suspended ceiling tiles. A plywood hatch will be necessary in the foyer area to provide access above and to services the rear of the new changing places room.

The current floor is stone flags which are uneven. The proposal is for a non-slip vinyl floor on marine plywood on aluminium joists on freestanding plastic height adjustable feet. The walls will be built on top of this.

It is proposed to replace the existing sliding door gear which is in a poor state of repair and not compatible with level access for disabled entry. The current situation is a bottom steel wheel on a steel runner. The proposal is to hang the doors on new sliding door gear with the tracks fitted behind the current fascia to the top of the doors. A small metal guide will be fitted to the bottom to guide the doors. The doors will have clearance from the floor giving a longer preservation. A changing places sign will be affixed to the door.

The areas within the building which the Council wishes to bring back into use, are in a dilapidated condition however with some minor fabric repairs and a freestanding facility that in no way affects the original structure access to the park can be widened without any long-term impact on the listed building.

The popularity and continued use of the stable block is vital to its conservation and continued existence. Returning more of the building to a public use will enhance its heritage significance by widening accessibility visitor engagement and education through physical access to the heritage. The largest risk to the conservation of the fabric is a lack of viable use. Vacancy poses a significant risk to the security of the site through theft, arson and vandalism.

Existing lighting will be left in place and isolated. New lighting to comprise of surface mounted LED luminaires mounted on new ceilings.

4.0 Access to the new Facility

The facility by its nature is for use by limited mobility users. It was felt that it should be positioned in the most prominent and accessible location in the park to accommodate this demographic. The café area was the obvious choice. Within the café area is a courtyard area where most visitors visit for the café and for toilet use. It was felt that the facility should be central and visible albeit without being visually unattractive in this listed park & buildings setting. An external pod was ruled out due to its visual appearance. An old storeroom within the C shaped old stables block was identified as it met the size and location criteria. Albeit the design had to be kept sympathetic due to the building being listed and of historic interest.

The internal finished floor will need to be raised approximately 65mm internally which will allow the retaining of the existing stone flags to remain untouched in line with conservation ethos. The new flooring will be the base for the new construction. The proposal is to raise the external tarmac level to meet the internal level and thus provide level access, this will be feathered out into the existing tarmac surface to provide as little visual impact as possible. The new tarmac is to match existing as far as practicable and to finish up to the new internal floor covering with a bitumen damp proof layer between the two surfaces. Any tarmac slope is to be kept below a 1:20 gradient.