

# Hexagon Studio Theatre Theatre | Access Statement

October 2024

**hada**  
*inclusive design consultancy and landscape architecture*  
*designing with plants and people*

24 Bella Vista Road  
Brixham  
Devon  
TQ5 8BQ

T 07766 815 554  
E [helen@hada.co.uk](mailto:helen@hada.co.uk)  
W [www.hada.co.uk](http://www.hada.co.uk)

| Issue date | Draft number | Draft by | Check by | Amended by | Notes                            | Sent for review to:               |
|------------|--------------|----------|----------|------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 23.12.12   | 01           | HA       | -        | HA         | 1st draft for comment            | Rose Burgoyne / Lucy Picardo, HTA |
| 24.01.08   | 02           | HA       | RB       | HA         | 2nd draft for comment            | Rose Burgoyne, HTA                |
| 24.01.09   | 03           | HA       | RB       | HA         | 3rd draft - HTA / planning edits | Rose Burgoyne, HTA                |
| 24.01.17   | 04           | HA       | JM       | HA         | 4th draft - HTA / planning edits | Jason Mckay / Rose Burgoyne, HTA  |
| 24.10.02   | 05           | HA       | -        | HA         | 5th draft - HTA / planning edits | Rose Burgoyne, HTA                |
| 24.10.16   | 06           | HA       | RB       | HA         | 6th draft - HTA edits            | Rose Burgoyne, HTA                |
| 24.10.18   | 07           | HA       | RB       | HA         | 7th draft - HTA comments / final | Rose Burgoyne, HTA                |

# Contents

|    |                                              |    |
|----|----------------------------------------------|----|
| 1. | Introduction                                 | 5  |
| 2. | Proposals Review                             | 8  |
| 3. | Appendix 2   References for inclusive design | 14 |



# 1. Introduction

## 1.0 Background

This Access Statement is intended to support the proposed new Hexagon Studio Theatre annex to the Hexagon Theatre designed by Haworth Tompkins Architects (HTA). The report follows on from a site survey which was conducted to identify any access issue in the existing building that may be resolved by the new extension.

A key part of the survey is to understand how the buildings will function together in respect of accessibility compliance and to ensure any key recommendations are woven into the proposals at an early stage.

The main theatre already provides the following:

- Accessible parking and drop off
- Level access to the Box Office and accessible toilets
- Telecoil induction loops in the auditoria for customers with hearing aids
- Lift access from level 00 to 01
- Designated wheelchair spaces in the theatre
- Accessible back of house and dressing room with en-suite shower / AWC

## 1.1 Project constraints

The theatre is not listed but is constructed of concrete and as such is restricted to working with current spatial arrangements and structure. The current main stage is not accessible to wheelchair users. The Hexagon Studio Theatre annex is a new construct and as such needs to tie in with the existing floor levels of the main theatre.

## 1.2 Method of review

The HTA emerging Stage 2 designs have been reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose as well as being ADM compliant in assisting the Theatre to meet their obligations of The Equality Act, given the changes in legislation in recent years and changes in expectations, attitudes and the usage of the building.

The statement does not describe or evaluate any part of the site that is used solely for inspection, repair or maintenance of any service or fitting, in accordance with Approved Document M. If a disabled person requires access to these areas as part of their work then their employer is expected to take all reasonable steps to ensure that there are no barriers to them carrying out their work. Any building adjustments that are required would be carried out at that time.

The design reviews consider the requirements of all users and their needs in the widest sense, including:

- People with restricted mobility;
- Blind and partially sighted people;

- People with hearing loss;
- Older people;
- People with dementia and memory difficulties;
- People with neuro diverse, different learning and perceptive abilities; and
- Families, children and young adults;

The meaning of 'disabled' in this Access Strategy is as defined in the Equality Act. Consideration is also given the LGBTQIA+ community.

### **Note:**

HADA provides guidance and advice as access consultants. The consultancy does not have the authority to officially approve designs, only appraise and confirm that a design complies with statutory standards, i.e. Building Regulations, or policy guidelines. Final responsibility remains with designers and the approvals authority.

## 1.3 Standards and policy

The access provisions are reviewed against the access regulations and standards that apply, which are identified below.

### National Regulations:

*The Building Regulations 2010, Approved Document M (Access to and use of buildings) Volume 2: Building other than dwellings*, HM Government, 2015 edition;

*The Building Regulations 2010, Approved Document*

*K (Protection from falling, collision and impact)*, HM Government, 2013 edition;

*Approved Document B (Fire safety) – Volume 2 - Buildings other than dwellinghouses* (2006 edition incorporating 2010 and 2013 amendments)

Amendments to AD Part M and new Part T : *Requirement T1: Toilet accommodation*, which came into force on 1 October 2024

**Best Practice:**

*BS 8300-2 Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment - Part 2 Buildings - Code of Practice*, British Standards Institution, 2018.

*British Standard 9999:2008 Code of Practice for Fire Safety in the Design, Management and use of Buildings*, British Standards Institution, 2008;

A full list of references and a description of relevant legislation, regulations, standards and guidance are detailed in Appendix 1 | References for inclusive design..

## 1.4 Other and best practice standards

*Approved Documents M, K and BS 8300:2009 +A1:2010* provide general access advice, but refer to other standards and regulations about specific aspects of buildings and their immediate surroundings.

However there are no nationally *enforceable* access standards or regulatory controls governing public

realm, recreational spaces and landscaping. **For primary routes and approaches to buildings Approved Documents M are taken as a benchmark for determining accessibility.** With regards to streetscape and pavement design, guidance is provided by the Department for Transport's Inclusive Mobility Guide and Transport Notes.

A degree of interpretation and appropriateness of these standards may be required on a case by case basis. A list of these are included in the appendix.

It is expected that the design proposals will comply with Building Regulations and support the adjacent existing Hexagon Theatre in their compliance with more recent statutory changes, e.g. Changing Places WCs.

## 1.6 The Equality Act

**Statutory consents**

When considering a reasonable adjustment to a physical feature, the Equality Act does not override the need to obtain consents such as planning permission, building regulations approval, listed building consent, scheduled monument consent and fire regulations. If the consent is not given, there is still a duty to consider a reasonable means of avoiding the feature.

Refer to Appendix A1.1 for further information.

**Design standards**

Service providers and public authorities carrying out their functions do not have to remove or alter a physical feature of a building for a period of 10 years from construction or installation if it accords with the relevant objectives, design considerations and

provisions in Approved Document M. They may still need to consider a reasonable means of avoiding the feature.

There appears to be few items that restrict FoH access and compromise an equal level of service and enjoyment of events taking place in the existing theatre but improvements BoH, and in particular to the stage, are desirable. Wheelchair positions in the main auditoria are flexible but limited due to a flat stalls floor and blocking rear sightlines. Whilst this does not affect the Hexagon Studio Theatre annex, the accessibility of the new building does mean that the Theatre can accommodate disabled performers more easily and provide better comfort and sightlines FoH as a managed approach.

## 1.7 Management and maintenance

Once building works are complete full accessibility will rely on effective facilities management.

Management items will range from provision of a good quality website to the effective maintenance of lifts in residential buildings. Inspection of specialist devices and training of staff should become a regular element of management processes. Access Management Plans can form part of a building operator's on-going duties.

## 1.8 Access for maintenance and services

The access statement does not describe or evaluate any part of the development that is used solely for inspection, repair or maintenance of any service or fitting, in accordance with Approved Document M. If a disabled person requires access to these areas as part of their work then their employer is expected to take all reasonable steps to ensure that there are no barriers to them carrying out their work. Any building adjustments that are required would be carried out at that time.

## 1.9 Consultation

The theatre conducts a post-show survey with audiences on all shows and this has informed their approach to access to date. The design team and Theatre have held fortnightly workshops with the Hexagon stakeholder group (end-users) plus the following:

- A 3-week public exhibition held at the Hexagon in December
- All staff briefing
- Chief exec and senior staff briefing
- Leadership and lead councillor briefing
- Neighbours liaison – BMS & Aparto Student Accommodation

- Arts Council Visit

Consultation workshops have included:

1. Theatre Trust
2. Access Disability Working Group in February 2024

### 1.10 Appointment

Helen Allen (trading as HADA) was appointed as Access Consultant to review plans and identify areas for improvement in September 2023.

## 2. Proposals Review

### 2.1 External approaches and parking

The site is well served by parking with 8 accessible bays in front of the main entrance and a nearby MSCP across the podium. The double stacking of accessible parking bays is intended to maximise proximity and quantity; following consultation with client groups, none are provided with the 1200mm side transfer zone in favour of maintaining the volume of bays for their proximity to the main entrance. Two end bays, however, will be marked up without reduction of numbers to provide access for unloading mobility aids. This will be managed by the theatre.

The existing cycle parking comprises Sheffield stands. This will be replaced by an external secure bike store. This will accommodate accessible adapted staff cycles with 1200mm end spaces for adapted bicycles and trikes. Accessible shower and WC facilities are discussed in sections 2.5 and 2.6.

The new bridge link will have good prominence and provide outdoor seating and shelter underneath.

The site survey found that the wider public realm was poorly maintained, although this is beyond the scope of the Hexagon Studio Theatre annex and ownership of the Theatre. Whilst being level on the whole, floor surfaces are in poor repair with trip hazards and poor signage and lighting from the surrounding streetscape.



Fig.1 Existing drop off and accessible Blue Badge parking



Fig.2 Aerial view of drop off

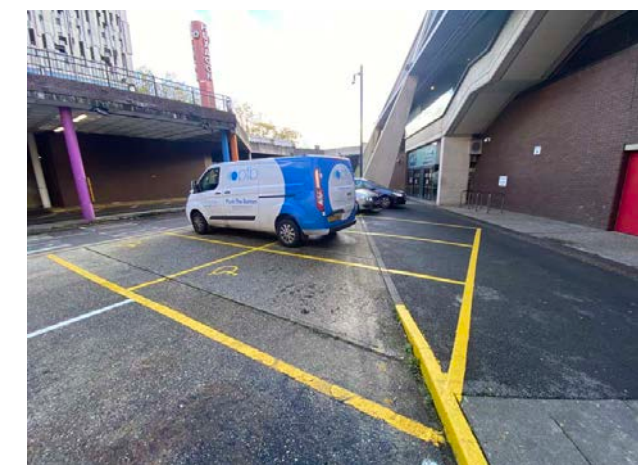


Fig.3 Existing accessible parking bays



Fig.4 Existing cycle stands under cover

2.2 Entrances and lobbies

The existing main Hexagon Theatre entrances will continue to be used at street via the ramp or down via the steps from podium level.

A new planted bridge link from the podium level will connect to the separate Hexagon Studio Theatre annex entrance ; a new opening will be created from the level 01 corridor via the glazing and concrete facade to link the buildings internally.

The Stage Door will be retained as is but it is currently too narrow for independent wheelchair access unless both door leaves are automated; this will form a separate project. Otherwise, performers and staff can use the main entrance, which are automated, at street level.

Purchase and collection of tickets will be separated from the bar. The box office will likely be ushers with ipads, or digital screens.

The bar will be equipped with induction loops and a lower level counter section.

Cycling staff will enter via the stage door entrance.

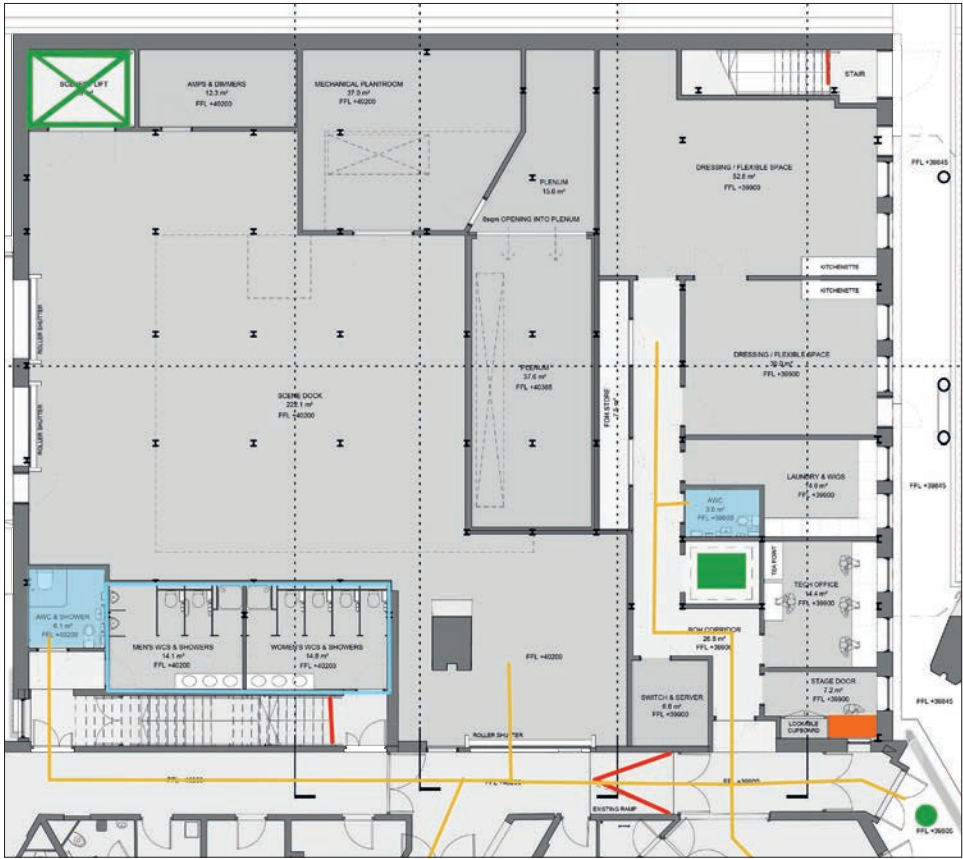


Fig.5 Proposed GF (street level)

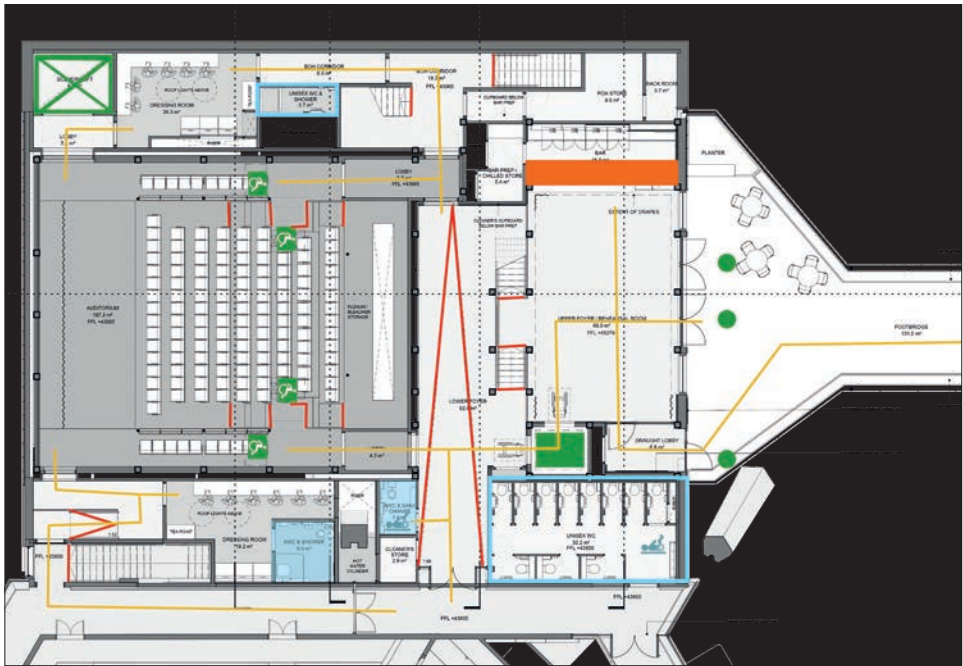


Fig.6 Proposed podium bridge link and entrance



Fig.7 Proposed planted bridge link

- Key
- accessible entrance / exit
  - automated doors
  - step free route
  - passenger lift
  - ⊗ goods lift
  - ∇ ramp (≤ 1:20)
  - step
  - accessible WC / shower
  - standard WCs
  - ♿ baby changing facilities
  - counter
  - ♿ safe refuge
  - ♿ wheelchair spaces

## 2.3 Circulation

Circulation in the existing theatre's front of house on the whole is very good with mostly open plan spaces. The corridor links from the existing theatre to the Hexagon Studio Theatre are level at street and podium level as follows:

- street level 00 (fig 9) - the primary route into the Workshop and BoH will be the retained 1:9 ramp over a span of 2.8m. As there is no landing at the foot of the ramp but one door is already held open
- podium level 01 - a new opening from the existing theatre with almost level 1:98 slope to the rear of the auditorium
- BOH floor level will be raised by 165mm to increase head height in workshop at G+0. As a result, there will be a short 1:12 ramp over a span of 1980mm to provide step-free access to the existing Hex Theatre.

There will be two new lifts as follows:

- A new oversized 1100x1400mm FoH lifting platform lift (L1) will provide access to all levels for the upper bar and lower foyer to the auditoria
- new BoH goods / stage lift (L2)

New lifts will not be fire protected but there is suitable level access egress to the main theatre at street or podium level. All lifts will have enclosed cars.

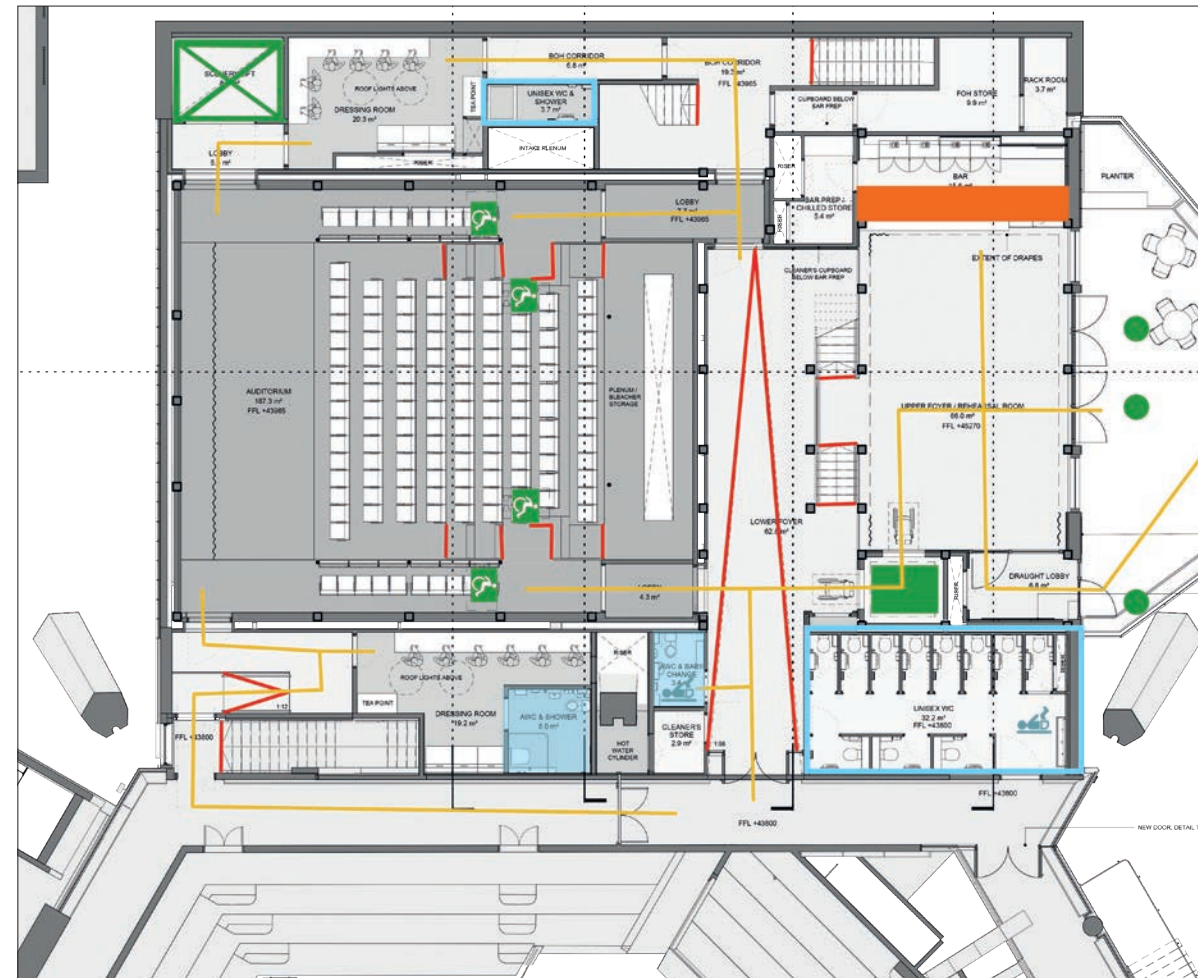


Fig.8 Level 01 podium links

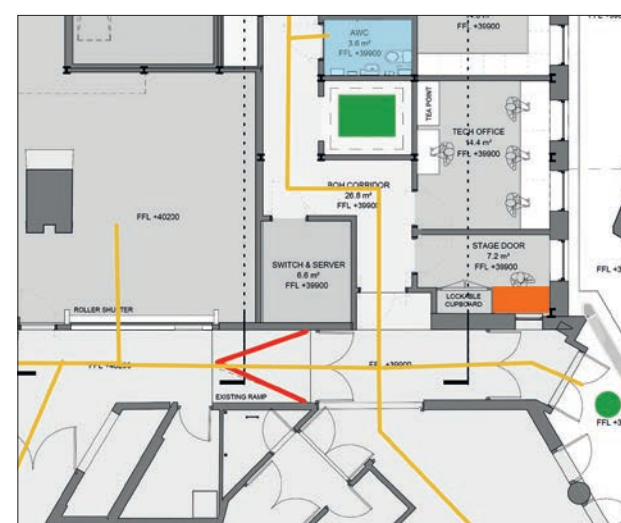


Fig.9 Level 00 links

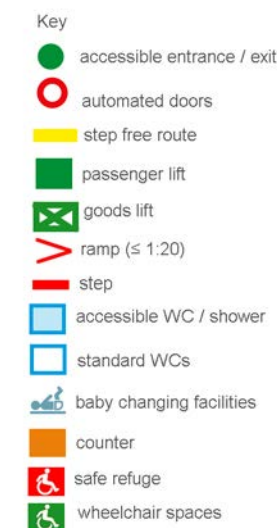


Fig.10 Proposed link position to new building

2.4 Auditoria and Control Room

Charcoal Blue have developed a variety of theatre layouts . The auditoria will have a variable capacity depending on the stage and performance format. All layout permutations will have permanent and removable spaces for wheelchair users to meet AD Part M and the Technical Standards requirements.

Seating design is yet to be detailed but in principle step-free end of seat rows will have removable armrests to enable side transfer from a wheelchair. The ‘traffic light’ system can also be adopted when selling seats for ‘easy access’ seating locations in addition to step-free.

The auditoria will also be fitted suitable sound enhancement systems for hearing aid users.

The mezzanine level will accommodate two wheelchair accessible spaces and the Control Desk, all of which are accessible via the lift.

Wheelchair accessible positions are not located too far down the left and right hand side wings due to poor sightlines.

Waiting spaces with live links to the performance for late comers and neuro-diverse patrons will be discussed at the next stage.

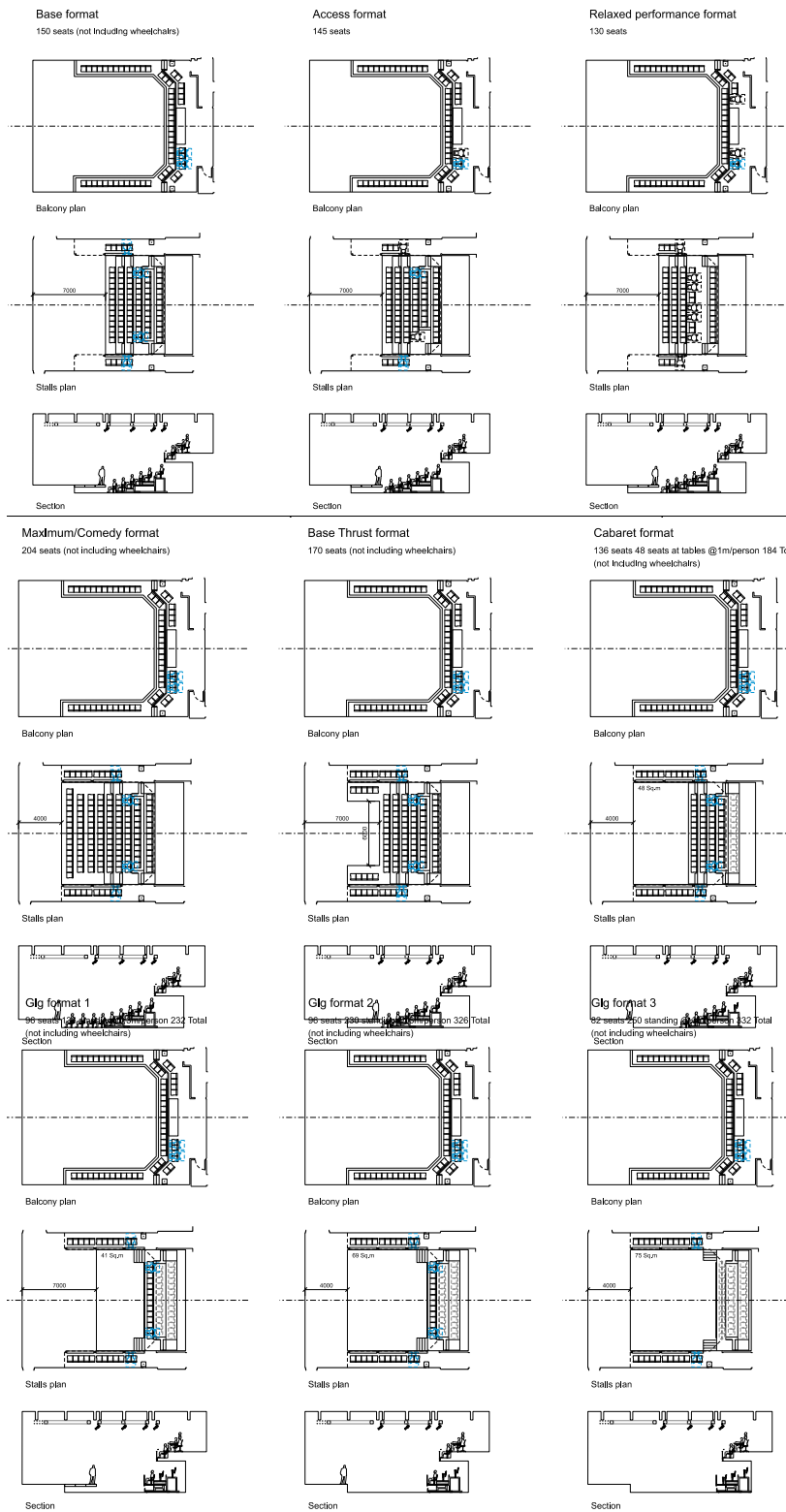


Fig.11 Proposed seating layout options

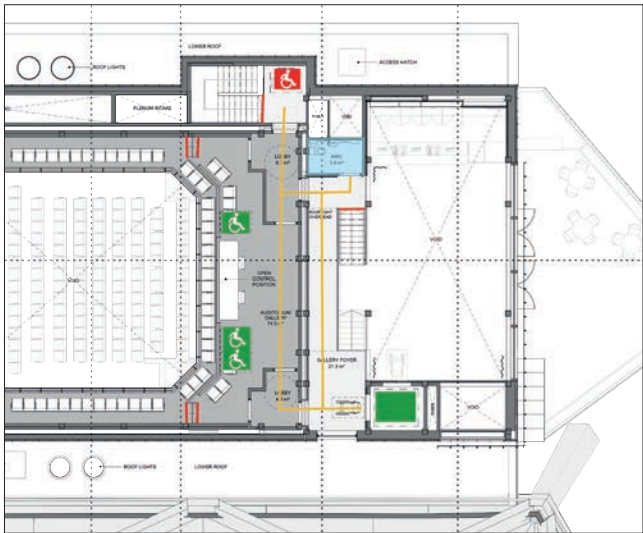


Fig.12 Proposed mezzanine and tech desk

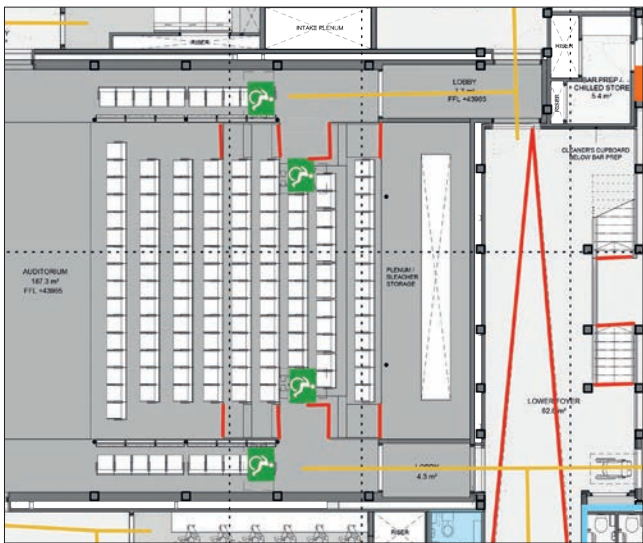


Fig.13 Proposed seating layout level 01

- Legend:
- Fixed seat
  - Removable seat
  - Retractable seat
  - Loose seat

2.5 WC provision

2.5.1 Back of House

At level 0 the proposals replace the existing male and female WC and shower facilities (1). The existing AWC (2) will be replaced with a new accessible WC and shower with an additional AWC (3) by the laundry room for staff. The existing theatre already has an accessible dressing room (4), which will be retained.

There will be two dressing rooms at level 01 with access to one AWC / shower to share (5) and one standard gender neutral WC / shower (6). The dressing rooms have been enlarged compared to the previous scheme, so that any performer can use the dressing room space. Both rooms will include a kitchenette and sofa.

Other WCs at this level are FoH.

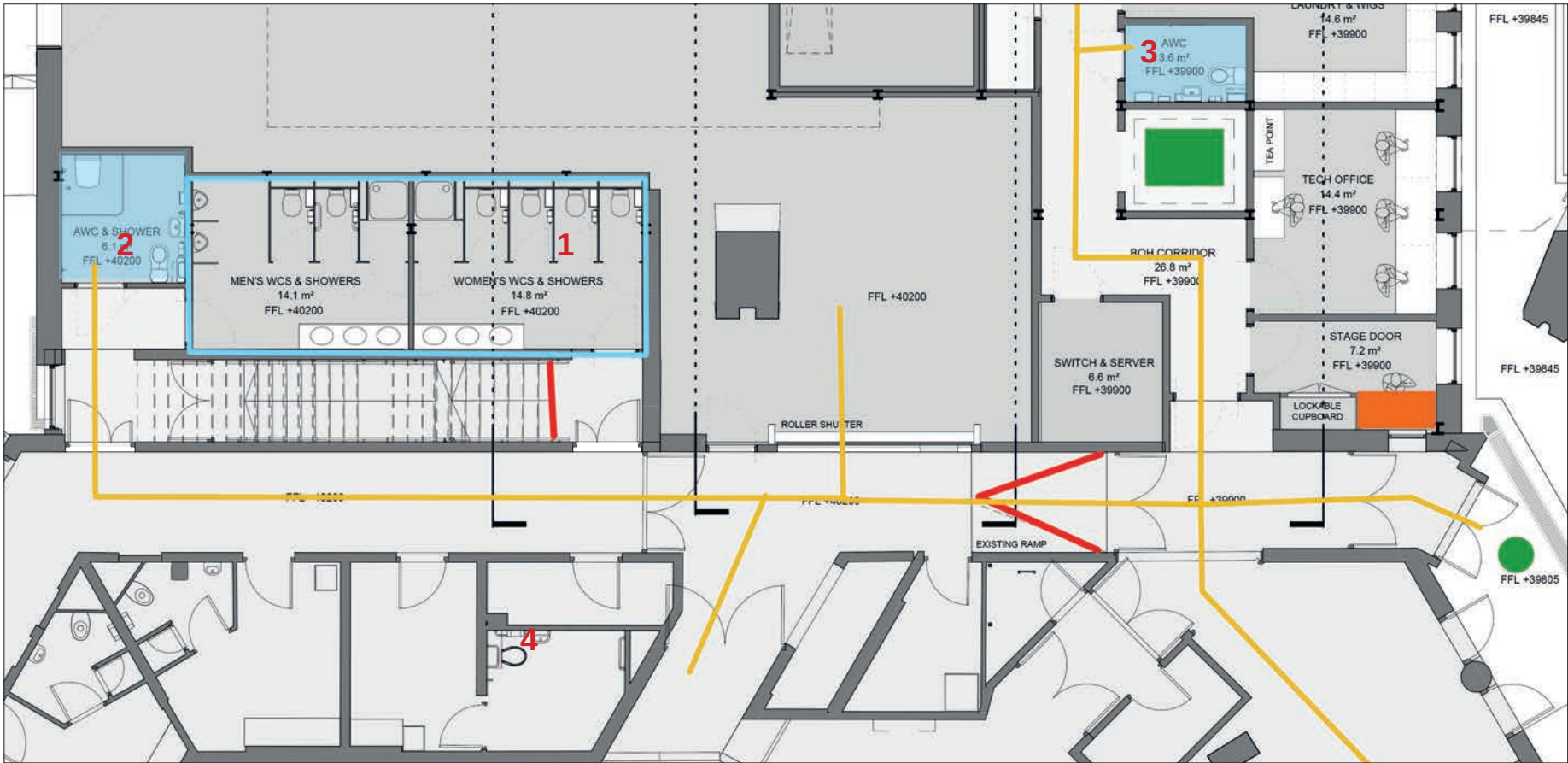


Fig.14 Level 00 BoH WCs / showers

2.5.2 Front of House

The FoH WC provision will be as follows:

- Level 01 unisex AWC FoH near the bar foyer (7)
- Level 01 standard WCs (8) near the bar foyer and for the existing theatre will provide both male, female and gender neutral facilities with baby change. The design of the standard WCs is such that the lobby approach is open plan with clear sightlines from the corridor route to future proof compliance with the new AD Part T from 1 October 2024. The corridor washroom door is

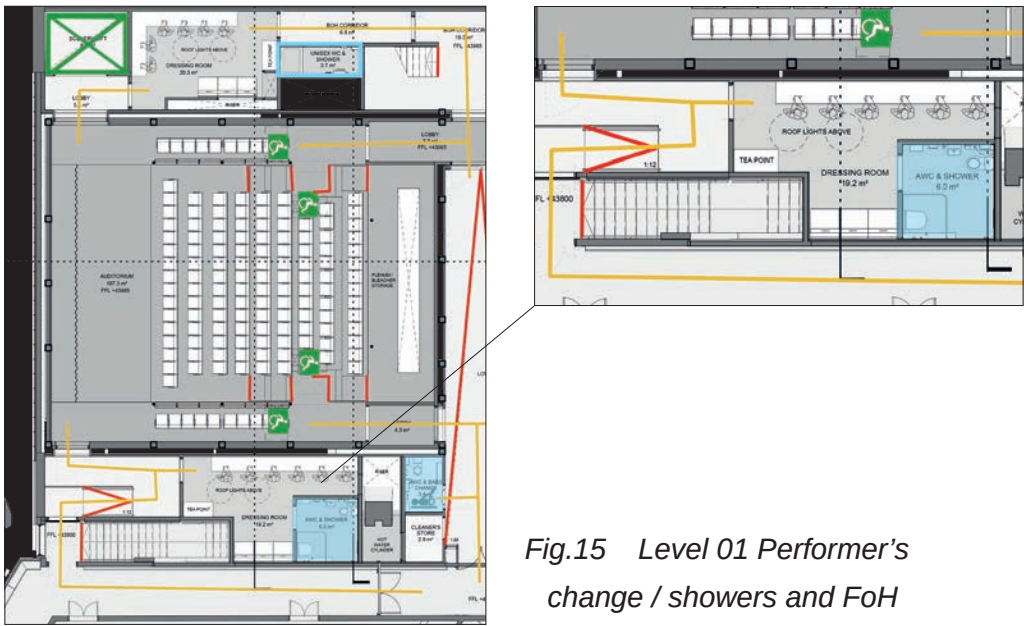


Fig.15 Level 01 Performer's change / showers and FoH

- Key
- accessible entrance / exit
  - automated doors
  - step free route
  - passenger lift
  - goods lift
  - ramp (≤ 1:20)
  - step
  - accessible WC / shower
  - standard WCs
  - baby changing facilities
  - counter
  - safe refuge
  - wheelchair spaces

on a magnetic hold open device and will rarely be closed, especially during operating hours, and only personnel with the correct access permissions will be able to close it.

As the capacity of the new studio theatre auditorium is below 350, there is no requirement for a Changing Places toilet within the new build. The Hexagon will endeavour to accommodate a new Changing Places AWC for the whole complex, as part of a separate project, by adapting an existing AWC with Changing Places equipment to enhance the existing provision, albeit slightly smaller than the full size 12m<sup>2</sup> room.

## 2.8 Emergency Egress

All new lifts will not be fire protected as horizontal evacuation is possible at level 01 to the main theatre or externally to podium level.

## 3.0 Conclusion

The proposed extension will comply with all relevant inclusive design legislation and will be accessible to users of the theatre. The extension will substantially improve accessibility as part of the whole visitor and performer's experience by providing an accessible performance and technical space, which is currently difficult to provide in the main auditorium, with improved seating positions and sightlines for wheelchair users.

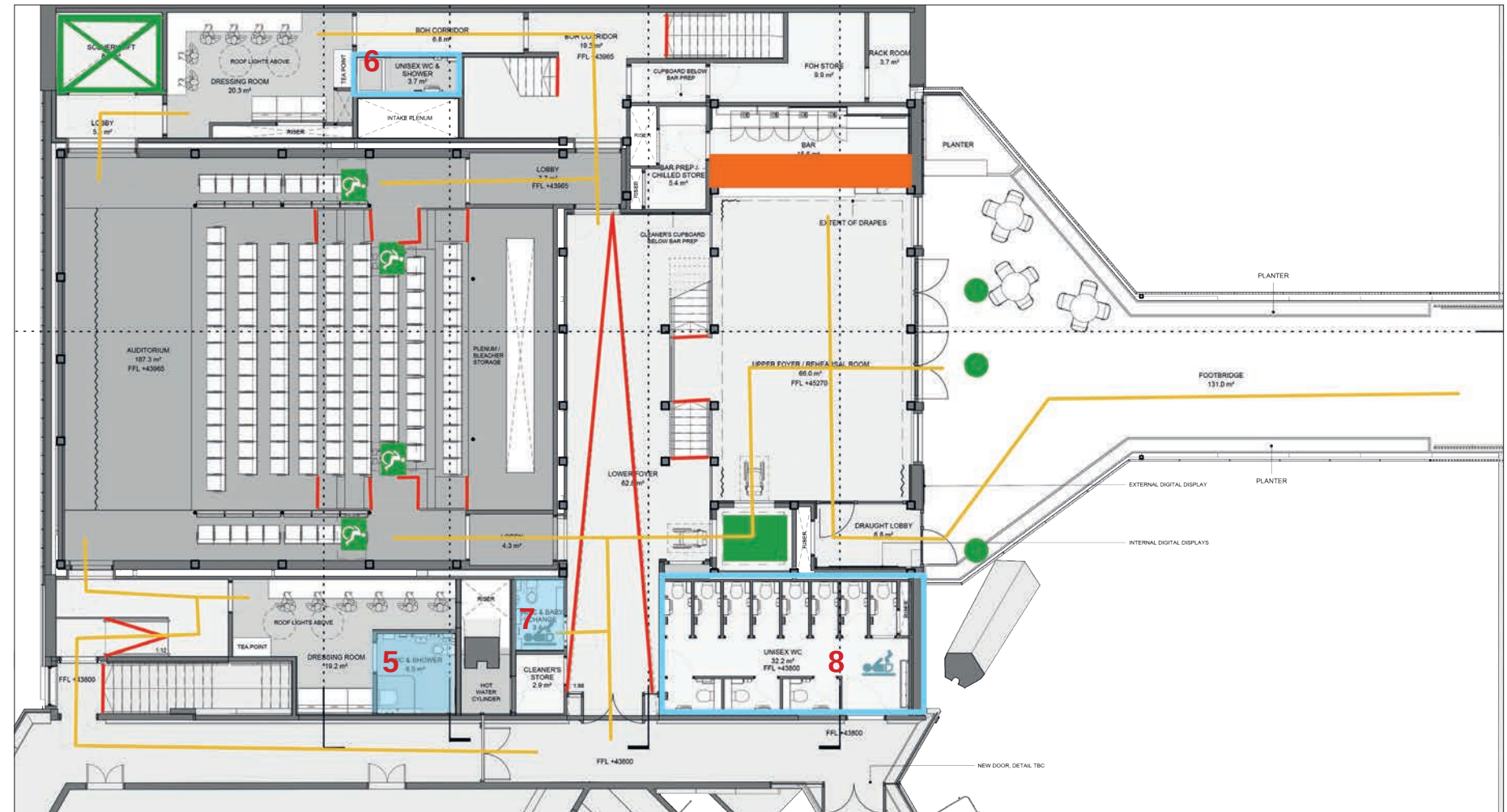


Fig.16 Level 01 proposed FoH WCs

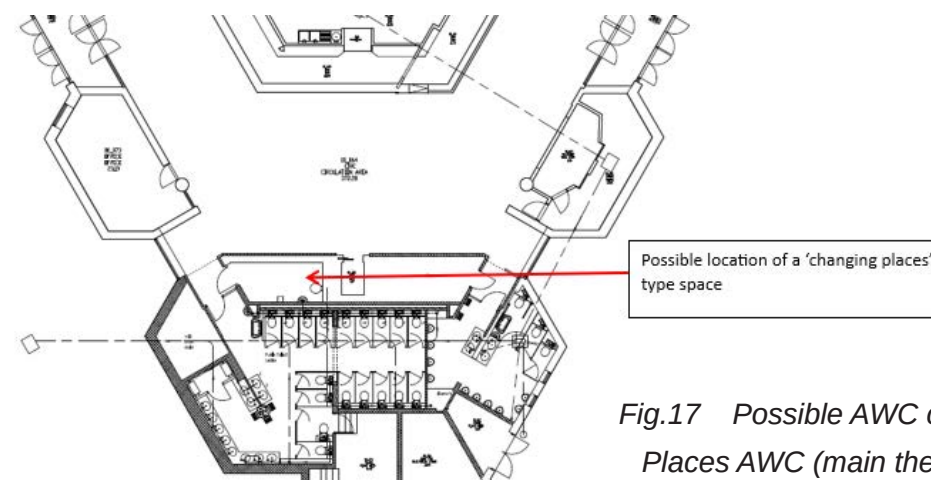


Fig.17 Possible AWC conversion into a Changing Places AWC (main theatre foyer)

- Key
- accessible entrance / exit
  - automated doors
  - step free route
  - passenger lift
  - X goods lift
  - / ramp (≤ 1:20)
  - step
  - accessible WC / shower
  - standard WCs
  - baby changing facilities
  - counter
  - safe refuge
  - wheelchair spaces

### 3. Appendix 2 | References for inclusive design

#### A1.1 Legislation

- **Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') combines and supersedes previous separate discrimination legislation (including the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended ('the DDA') and the disability discrimination provisions of SENDA 2001 for England, Wales and Scotland. People are protected from discrimination and harassment based on 'protected characteristics'; victimising anyone as a result of action taken in connection with the Act is also unlawful. There are nine different protected characteristics under the Act which have different levels of protection depending on the context (such as employment, provision of goods and services or the provision of education). This Access Statement focuses on the protected characteristic of disability; the definition of disability is essentially the same as under the DDA.

The types of discrimination that can arise in relation to disability are:

- Direct disability discrimination;
- Indirect disability discrimination;
- Treating disabled people unfavourably because of something arising in consequence of their disability without justification; and
- A failure to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people ('the RA duty'). The RA duty works in different ways depending on who requests the reasonable adjustments to be made, for example an employee or a member of the public.

The Act also provides protection for people who are treated less favourably because of their relationship with a disabled person (such as a carer) or for people treated less favourably because they are mistakenly believed to be disabled. A disabled person can always be treated more favourably than a non-disabled person.

If an employer is a listed public authority (such as a local authority) they will be subject to the public sector equality duty. If the employer is not a public authority but carries out a public function as part of its work, it will be covered by the general part of the equality duty in relation to the exercise of that function.

The public sector equality duty seeks to promote equality from within an organisation and the general duty requires the organisation to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Due regard must be given to these three aims when undertaking procurement and to comply with procurement law, consideration must be given to the extent to which equality considerations are relevant and proportionate to the subject matter of the contract.

Most of the listed public authorities are also subject to the specific duty (which operates slightly differently in England and Wales). This involves reporting requirements to demonstrate compliance with the three aims of the general duty. The public sector

equality duties are relevant both to the design and the management of the built environment.

#### **The Reasonable Adjustment Duty and specific building provisions**

The Equality Act does not contain any specific requirements for the built environment and therefore has no relevance to 'compliance' in respect of physical building standards.

#### **Statutory Consents**

When considering a reasonable adjustment to a physical feature, the Act does not override the need to obtain consents such as planning permission, building regulations approval, listed building consent, scheduled monument consent and fire regulations. If the consent is not given, there is still a duty to consider a reasonable means of avoiding the feature.

- Planning Act 2008, HMSO, 2008
- Disability Discrimination Act 2005, HMSO, 2005
- The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, Department of Health, 1970
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005

#### A1.2 Regulations and Standards

##### **Building Regulations 2010**

- **Approved Document M (Access to and use of buildings) – Volume 2: Building other than dwellings**, HMSO, 2015 edition;
- **Approved Document B (Fire safety) – Volume 2 - Buildings other than dwellinghouses** (2006 edition incorporating 2010 and 2013 amendments)

- **Approved Document K - Protection from falling, collision and impact**, HMSO, 2013.
- **Part T : Requirement T1: Toilet accommodation**, 1 October 2024

Regulations require Building Control approval. The Regulations make clear that designs other than those shown in the document can be approved if they are justified as being equally or more effective. Approval confers acceptance that the building meets all reasonable standards in respect of physical access for disabled people with regard to the Equality Act.

#### National Planning Policy

- **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2023

The NPPF states that all developments should be designed to be inclusive and that this should be addressed by local policies. It also advises that local planning authorities should assess their housing requirements by considering the needs of the different groups in the community including children, older people and disabled people.

- **Town and Country Planning** (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, Article 9

## A1.3 References

#### British Standards

*BS 8300:2009 (Amended 2010) Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people. Code of practice*, British Standards Institution, 2010.

*BS 9999:2008 Code of practice for fire safety in the*

*design, management and use of buildings*, British Standards Institution, 2008.

*BS 9266:2013 Design of accessible and adaptable general needs housing. Code of practice*, British Standards Institution, 2013.

*BS 5656-2:2004 Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts. Particular applications for passenger and goods passenger lifts. Accessibility to lifts for persons including persons with disability*, British Standards Institute, 2004.

*DD CEN/TS 15209:2008 Tactile paving surface indicators produced from concrete, clay and stone*, British Standards Institution, 2008.

*BS 7997:2003 Products for tactile paving surface indicators*, British Standards Institution, 2003.

*BS 5395-1:2010 Stairs. Code of practice for the design of stairs with straight flights and winders*, British Standards Institution, 2010.

*BS 7000-6:2005 Design Management Systems. Managing inclusive design. Guide*, British Standards Institution, 2005.

*BS 5499-4:2013 Safety signs. Code of practice for escape route signing*, British Standards Institution, 2013.

*BS 8501:2002 Graphical symbols and signs. Public information symbols*, British Standards Institute, 2002.

*BS EN 81-28:2003, Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts. Remote alarm on passenger and goods passenger lifts*, British Standards Institution, 2003

*BS EN 81-41:2010, Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts. Special lifts for the transport of persons and goods. Vertical lifting platforms intended for use by persons with impaired mobility*, British Standards Institution, 2010

*BS EN 81-70:2003, Safety rules for the construction and installation of lifts. Particular applications for passenger and goods passenger lifts. Accessibility to lifts for persons including persons with disability*, British Standards Institution, 2003

#### Access Statements

*Guidance on Information Requirements and Validation*, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010.

*Design and Access Statements: How to Write, Read and Use Them*, Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE), 2006.

*Planning and Access for Disabled People*, ODPM, 2003.

#### Urban Design / External Environment / Landscape / Transport

*Inclusive Mobility: A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure*, Oxley P., Department for Transport, 2002.

*Improving Walkability: Good Practice Guidance on Improving Pedestrian Conditions as Part of Development Opportunities*, Transport for London, 2005.

*Guidance on the Use of Tactile Paving Surfaces*, Department for Transport 2007.

*Traffic Advisory Leaflet 5/95 Parking for Disabled People*, Department for Transport, 1995.

*Planning Policy Guidance 13: Transport*, Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011.

*Shared Space: Local Transport Note 1/11*, Department for Transport, 2011.

*Inclusive urban design: Streets for life*, Architectural Press, 2006.

*Inclusive Urban Design: A guide to creating accessible public spaces*, David Bonnett Associates, BSI, 2013

#### *Signage, Lighting And Wayfinding*

*The Colour, Light and Contrast Manual: Designing and Managing Inclusive Built Environments*, Bright K., Cook G., Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

*Sign Design Guide: a guide to inclusive signage*, JMU and the Sign Design Guide, 2000.

#### *Buildings*

*Building inclusion : Physical access guidance for the arts*. Arts Council 2013

*Building Sight: a Handbook of Building and Interior Design Solutions to Include the Needs of Visually Impaired People*, Barker, Barrick and Wilson, RNIB/HMSO, 1995.

*Making Existing Buildings Accessible: Museums and Art Galleries*. Cave, Adrian. London: RIBA, 2007

*Technical Standards for Places of Entertainment*, The Association of British Theatre Technicians, Entertainment Technology Press, 2013

#### *Signage, lighting and wayfinding*

*The Colour, Light and Contrast Manual: Designing and Managing Inclusive Built Environments*, Bright K., Cook G., Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

*Sign Design Guide: a guide to inclusive signage*, JMU and the Sign Design Guide, 2000.

#### *Office and commercial*

*Workplace health, safety and welfare. Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. Approved Code of Practice L24*, HSE Books ,1992.

*The Accessible Office: Designing the Inclusive Workplace*, JMU Access Partnership, Royal National Institute of Blind People, 2005.