

Haringey Civic Centre

Main Entrance Access Statement

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1 Accessibility

1.1 Executive Summary

Buro Happold (Inclusive Design) have been appointed to provide inclusive design consultancy services on the full refurbishment and extension of the Haringey Civic Offices, which is primarily office space with some community interfaces.

The following report sets out the parameters for on-going design development of the Haringey Civic Offices. These parameters set out the following approach to inclusive design – that creating inclusive and accessible facilities starts with the simple premise that inclusion is embedded in the design process to remove barriers and continuously challenge and interrogate our design.

As the aspirations of the project are to adopt an inclusive approach rather than the minima set out in the Building Regulations Approved Document M, Part M compliance in itself is not sufficient and good practice guidance such as BS8300-2018 'Design of an accessible and inclusive built environment' was adopted as a baseline measure of suitability.

Our strategic approach to access, inclusion and delivering a building that meets or exceeds minimum requirements will be to provide a building that allows people to use it safely, with dignity, comfort, convenience and confidence.

At a minimum, the design of the building should be welcoming to the wider community and accommodate those who have specific requirements. The building and its immediate surroundings should enable people to be able to make effective, independent choices about how they use the building without experiencing undue effort or separation. They must be able to participate equally in the activities that the scheme offers.

Design solutions must also consider not only those barriers that form physical constraints but also barriers experienced by people with learning difficulties, mental ill health issues, people who are deaf, deafened and hard-of-hearing and people who are blind or partially sighted or are neuro-divergent.

No matter how physically accessible a building is, without clear operational policy mechanisms, the accessibility of the building will be compromised and over time, diminish. Therefore, sufficiently robust provision, criterion and practices must be established by the building management and operators including the development of active management plans.

1.1.1 Inclusive Design Standards and Guidance

- BS 8300-1:2018 Design of accessible and inclusive built environment Part 1: External Environment – Code of Practice
- BS 8300-2:2018 Design of accessible and inclusive built environment Part 2: Buildings
- Building Regulation Approved Document K – Protection from falling, collision and impact 2013
- Building Regulation Approved Document M – Access to and use of Buildings Vol 1: Dwellings, 2016
- Building Regulation Approved Document M – Access to and use of Buildings Vol 2: Buildings Other Than Dwellings, 2015
- London Cycling Design Standards, TfL, 2014

1.1.2 The Equality Act (2010)

The Equality Act 2010 provides the legal framework that protects disabled people from discrimination. The Act replaced the Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005 (DDA) and creates a piece of anti-discrimination legislation across nine 'protected characteristics'. These are:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Age | • Pregnancy and maternity |
| • Disability | • Race |
| • Gender reassignment | • Religion or belief |
| • Marriage and civil partnership | • Sex |
| | • Sexual orientation |

A person has a disability if they have a 'physical or mental impairment' which has a 'substantial and long-term effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities'.

The Act applies to all providers of services, a public authority carrying out their functions, an association in Great Britain and employers. It applies to all services, whether or not a charge is made for them.

The reasonable adjustments duty within the Act imposes a duty on employers, service providers and public functions to make reasonable adjustments to any physical feature that may put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to non-disabled people. This is not a minimalist policy of simply ensuring that some access is available to disabled people; it is, so far as is reasonably practicable, to approximate the access enjoyed by disabled people to that enjoyed by the rest of the public.

The Equality Act 2010 carries ongoing responsibilities which will continue once the Haringey Civic Centre project is complete.

1.2 Access Statement

1.2.1 External Environment & Approach

It is important that the external environments of the civic offices meet best practice provision in inclusive design not only to meet the needs of people with disabilities, but also as inclusive design is indivisible from good design and will benefit all the users of the building in terms of providing legible, logical, safe and navigable pedestrian routes externally and spacious and legible spaces internally.

Inclusive Design is the practice of ensuring that a design is convenient and welcoming with no disabling barriers, providing independent access without additional undue effort, separation or special treatment for all users, and is a key consideration for Haringey Council. This statement sets out the design intent with recommendations on how to ensure the most inclusive building for staff and visitors.

Any changes of level within the public realm and the approach to the main entrance will ensure gradients and any changes in level will be as shallow as possible and circulation routes will be clear, logical and free of obstructions. Potential obstacles, such as street furniture and cycle parking, should be located off the primary circulation routes through the public realm and should contrast visually with the background to ensure they are obvious on approach.

By avoiding any level changes this is of benefit to all users, but particularly disabled people. Those with mobility issues will not need to negotiate either a sloped, ramped or stepped approach, whilst those who are blind or partially sighted will be at a significantly lesser risk of slips and trips. Such an arrangement also assists parents with prams and (to a lesser degree) people with luggage. Level access ensures that the main entrance is welcoming for all and promotes inclusion by ensuring everyone can enter the building from the same location.

By removing the ramp at the main entrance allows more straight forward access for all building users, arriving on foot, by public transport or from the accessible car parking spaces. Level access ensures that all building users can access the building easily. The existing ramp does not meet current regulations/ standards and as such would need to be upgraded to meet current standards, ideally by the provision of a 'slope' as defined in 8.1.4 of BS 8300-1:2018. By removing it and improving the external landscaping and omitting the ramp ensures more inclusive straightforward access to the building for all potential users

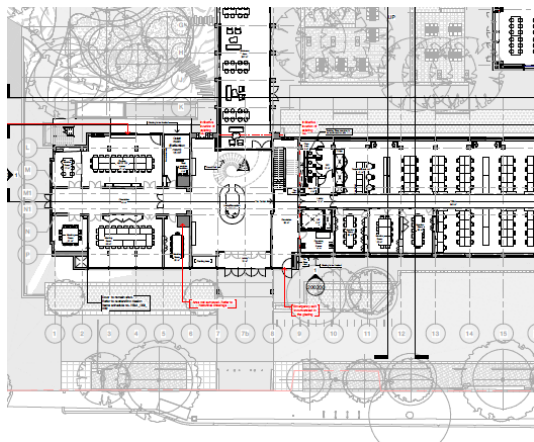


Figure 1- Main Entrance

Access to the site will be predominately by public transport, supplemented with some accessible parking at the main entrance. The accessible parking bays have been designed to provide a clear 1200mm access zone to one side and foot of the bays meeting AD M Vol 2 and BS8300-1. The designated parking spaces for disabled people will be located on a level road surface and not more than 45m from the main entrance.

A seating strategy for the public realm/ external areas is still being developed, however it should take regard of travel distances between buildings and parking /drop off and the changes in level across the site. The distance between accessible seating opportunities should be no greater than 50m. A variety of seating should be available, some with backrests and arms on both sides to provide additional support. Seating areas should also include space alongside for strollers/prams and wheelchair and scooter users.

Potential obstacles, such as street furniture and cycle parking, should be located off the primary circulation routes through the public realm and should contrast visually with the background to ensure they are obvious on approach.

1.2.2 Entrances & Reception Area

By improving the entrance and providing a single point of entry helps to ensure that all building users can identify the route to the main entrance and subsequent reception area.

The location of the reception desk is planned to be centrally located in the main reception foyer and will be easy to locate for people unfamiliar with the building. The surroundings of the reception should be designed to have a plain background to ensure someone with a visual impairment is able to lipread if required.

It should be noted that a Changing Places facility is planned, located near the main entrance lobby. Therefore, to ensure people who require to use this facility, a level entrance approach will ensure they can access the building and facility more easily than having to overcome a ramp, which may not always be suitable for user needs.

1.2.3 Design Development

Inclusive Access is legally mandated by :-

- The Disability and Discrimination Act (1992)
- The Equality Act 2010

In terms of access to buildings the tenets of these acts are set out through:-

- Volume 2 of Part M the Building Regulations, Access and use of buildings other than dwellings
- British Standard 8300-1 2018 Design of an accessible and inclusive environment: External Environment

In terms of historic buildings and their needs to address the inclusive access legislation this is set out in :-

- Historic England manual Easy Access to Historic Buildings

The forward of BS8300:2018 sets out the agenda around inclusive access as follows:-

The aim of this British Standard is to give built environment professionals the information they need at the outset of a project to achieve an accessible and inclusive environment and to anticipate and overcome any restrictions and barriers that prevent any user making full and independent use of the built environment.

Inclusive access to all buildings is not just concerned with how a disabled person might enter the building through the front door, the requirements of the legislation and guidance are concerned with accessibility from the point of arrival at the boundary of the site to the point of entry to the building, whether that be on foot, in a wheel chair, by bus, as a disabled driver or a disabled passenger in a car, all routes to the front door from these arrival points have to meet all the requirements of the DDA legislation.

The Historic England manual does set out scenarios where total compliance with the building regulations or the British standard might be waived. However there remains a presumption that all the requirements of the DDA act are

still met and that any deviation from the guidance offered is only on the basis that significant heritage impact would occur.

The design of an inclusive environment in the public realm is driven by different degrees of slope. All three slopes are considered “accessible” if they meet certain criteria.

- Between 1:12 (max) and 1:20 a slope, which is referred to as a ramp, is compliant if it is provided with attendant handrails and with landings at specified intervals.
- Between 1:20 and 1:60 the slope is no longer defined as a ramp and so no handrails are required, however landings are still needed for every rise vertically of 500mm.
- When a slope is flatter than 1:60 it is considered to be technically flat.

It is possible to approach a building via a flight of steps, but an alternative sloped/ramped route must also be provided, established by 1.19 of Part M. Where the building is public, and particularly where it fulfils a civic function, there is an expectation, although this is not specifically identified in the legislation, that the standard of provision goes beyond the legal requirements of the legislation.

The historic view that a secondary and more tortuous or circuitous disabled approach meets the legislative requirements is no longer considered adequate, it would fall foul of the Equality Act.

The situation at Haringey Civic Offices is that the main entrance to the building is 390mm above the back of the footway in the High Road, a very modest change of level. However passing in to the site the levels then fall into the side road, so at the base of the steps there is a level change of 800mm to navigate. This is overcome with a small flight of 4 Steps leading to a landing in front of the doors. A ramped access route, with handrails was added to the left of the main doors in the 1990s. This arrangement would no longer be considered acceptable for the following reasons: -

Ramp is too steep.

- Landings not of appropriate dimensions
- Ramp not sufficiently wide
- Handrails not compliant

Although the existing steps appear to be largely compliant, they are in poor condition.

In order to meet the current inclusivity standards the following need to be met: -

- All users of the building must be able to enter via the main entrance;
- The distance between any disabled car parking bays and the front doors must be less than 50 metres;
- The disabled parking bays must be no steeper than 1:50 in any direction.

In order to maintain a stepped approach and to maintain the steps in their current position it would be necessary to provide ramped / sloped approaches of equal merit and meeting all the guidance criteria. For the steps to remain in their current position the ramps/slopes would have to run left and/or right from the landing at the top of the steps and they would need to be set back between the façade of the Civic Building and the existing column which supports the canopy. A ramped approach could be achieved as follows:-

- A ramp running to the left toward Wood Green requires a slope 15 metres long at 1:20.1 with a landing
- Running toward Trinity Road requires a 19metre long slope at 1:20.1 with a landing. However, in order to retain the two existing malus trees which are close to the façade the ramp would need to dog leg around them, making it far longer. Removal of the trees would impact on the Biodiversity Nett Gain Score, a mandated requirement.

So while perhaps technically feasible to run ramps or slopes left and right away from the front doors, this would introduce new significant levels of impact to the frontage of the Civic Centre due to the associated lengths of walls and railings which must be provided.

The steps in their current form could not be retained due to their poor condition and their lack of compliance. They would need to be replaced. If they are to retain their current form then a flight of 4 risers would need to be re-delivered, so the current rather odd and illogical drop in levels into the site from the highway would also remain.

While retention and reworking of the steps was initially considered, the significant compromises in terms of inclusive access, plus the heritage impacts arising from the new handrails and walls that would require, meant that retention of the existing stepped configuration was quickly rejected.

The alternative approach relies on an incredibly gentle rise up to the building from the High Road, just 490mm in 15 metres. This allows the ground plane to simply sweep up to the front door, allowing all of the railings and retaining walls to be removed. This generates a far less cluttered frontage to the building allowing the arrival space to become a place where the public can dwell before entering the Civic Office, a space to enjoy rather than simply to pass through.

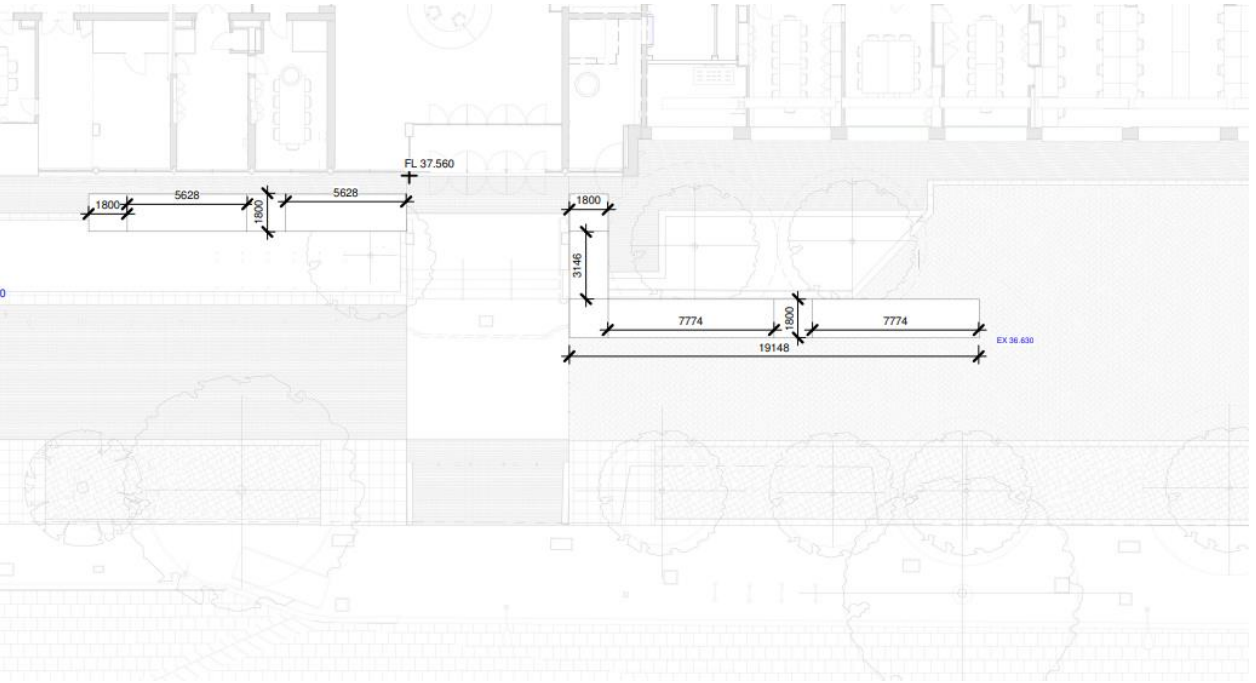


Figure 2 – Ramp Options

Ramp Options	Access Impact	Heritage Impact	Overall
Existing	Does not provide adequate accessibility. Building users are diverted away from the entrance to come back on themselves. The existing ramp is narrow and includes a sharp U-turn. There is no opportunity to retain and refurbish the existing ramp.	The existing ramp dates from 1987 and detracts from the architectural significance of the listed building because of its poor design quality, in red brick which contrasts with the yellow brick of the original phase, and due to the visual clutter of the handrails on the ramp and added to the front steps.	This option was discounted as the existing ramp is not compliant to current regulations. As part of the refurbishment project, Building Control will stipulate that the building is made compliant to current regulations (further detail provided in design development section above).
Northern Ramp (Trees Retained)	Does not provide adequate accessibility. Retaining the two existing trees means that the northern ramp is required to dog leg around the trees with a total length of 22.294m. This means that building users will need to take a different route to the main entrance and will not be truly inclusive.	This would involve the removal of the existing ramp which would enhance the architectural interest of the listed building. The proposed ramp would be set away from the front elevation so that it would be a more prominent feature in the landscape and this with its length would distract attention from the listed building.	This option was discounted due to the accessibility impact and the heritage impact both being significant.
Northern Ramp (Trees Removed)	Does not provide adequate accessibility. Removing the two existing trees will reduce the ramp length to 14.856m. However, this still means that building users will have a different access route to the main entrance and will not be truly inclusive.	This would involve the removal of the existing ramp which would enhance the architectural interest of the listed building. The proposed ramp would be flush with the front elevation so it would read as part of the listed building. The length of the ramp along the principal façade would distract attention from the listed building.	This option was discounted as the removal of the trees would have a significant impact on the Biodiversity Net Gain target. Removing the two trees would remove BNG credits, which would mean the scheme would be below the minimum 10% requirement.
Southern Ramp	Does not provide adequate accessibility. Similarly to the northern ramp (trees removed), the southern ramp will be 14.856m in length. Building users will not have the same access route to the main entrance, so will not be truly inclusive.	This would involve the removal of the existing ramp which would enhance the architectural interest of the listed building. The proposed ramp would be flush with the front elevation so it would read as part of the listed building. The length of the ramp along the principal façade would distract attention from the listed building.	This option was discounted due to the accessibility impact and the heritage impact both being significant.
Proposed Design	Provides level access to the main entrance through	This would involve the removal of the existing	This is the preferred option as promotes

	a gentle rise from the High Street. The proposed design makes the main entrance truly accessible as all building users follow the same route to the main entrance.	ramp and handrails to the front entrance which would enhance the architectural interest of the listed building. The proposed ramp is the least intrusive approach to incorporating level access to the listed building because it would be located perpendicular to the building rather than running along the length of the principal elevation. The harm resulting from the loss of the steps, which have modern paving, is outweighed by the improved ramp access.	accessibility, and has least impact on the architectural interest of the listed building.
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1.2.4 Heritage Assessment

Montagu Evans has reviewed the history and significance of the front steps and provided an assessment of the effect of replacing them with a ramp to improve level access to the front entrance.

The front steps are part of the original design of the building and are integrated with the portico and raised beds surrounding the Civic Centre. The front steps form part of the arrival sequence from the street to the main reception and have been identified as being of high significance.

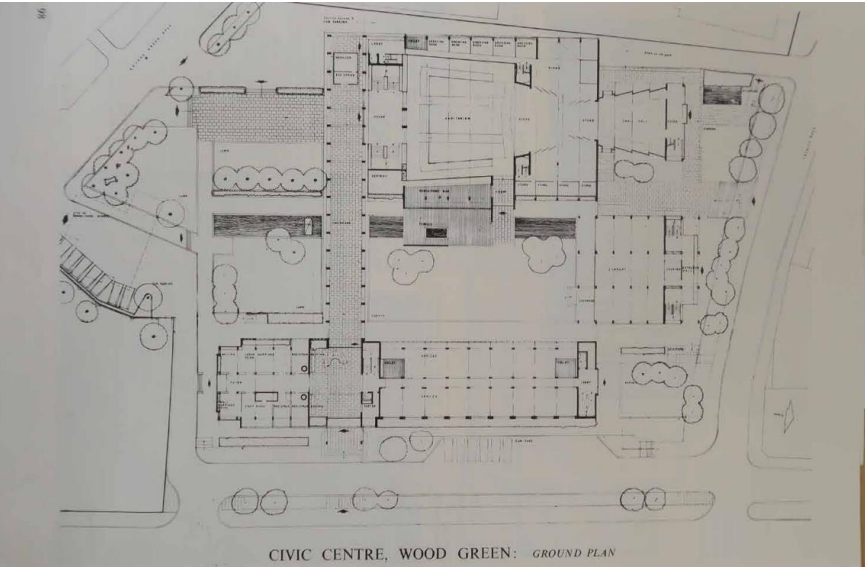


Figure 3 – Original Ground Floor Plan



Figure 4 – Historic Photo

Figure 5 – Historic Photo



Figure 6 – Proposed Design



In 1987 planning permission was granted for the ramped access to the south of the main entrance (application reference 1987/0673). The description of development was:

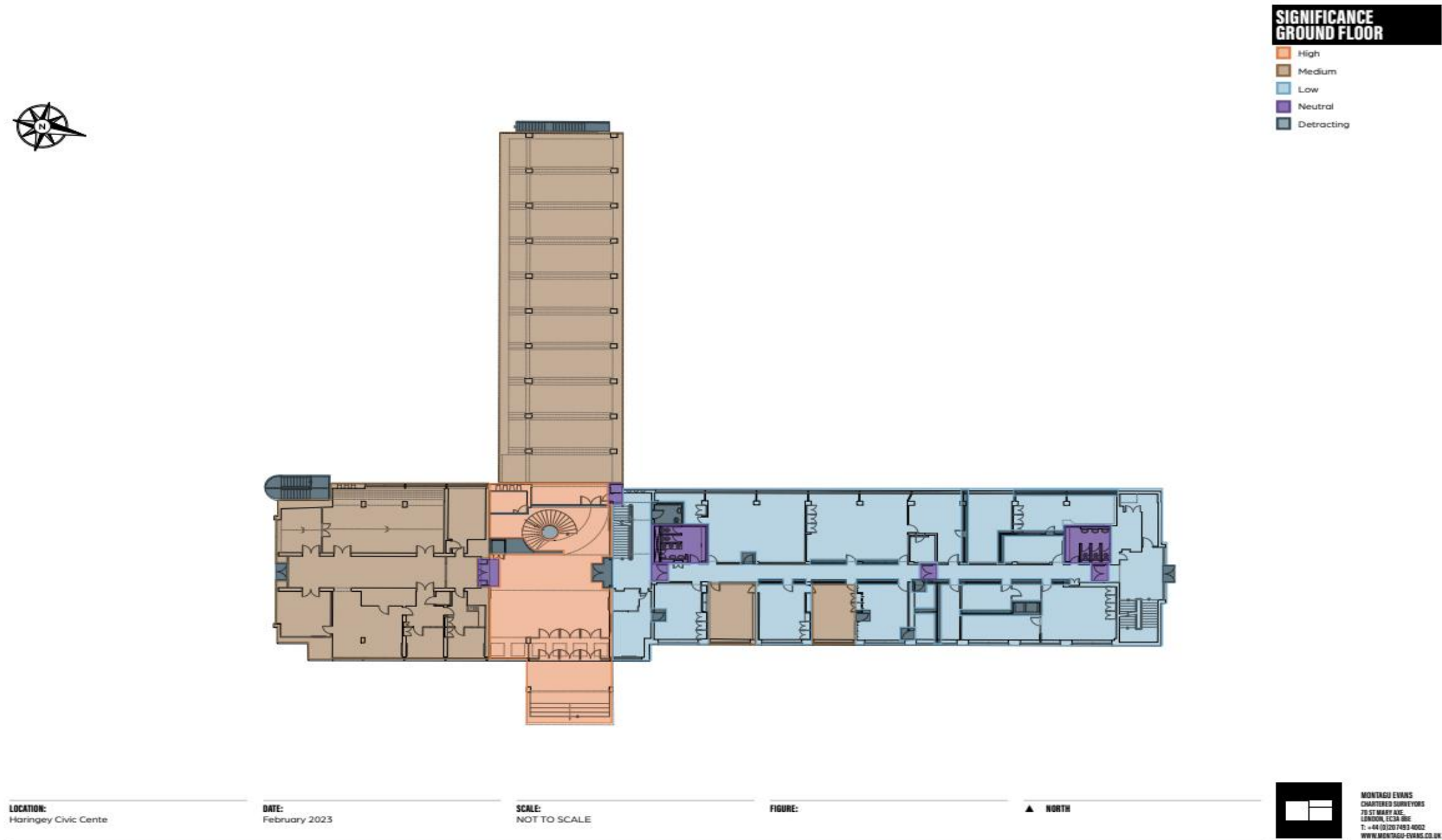
“Provision of new ramped access to main entrance, renewal of pavings and provision a handrails to main entrance pavements & northstop”.

This indicates that the pavings and handrails to the front steps date from c. 1987 and are not original but were replaced and added at the same time as the ramped access, which is consistent with their appearance.



Figure 7 – 1987 Ramp Photo

There was no assessment of the significance of the ramp in the 2019 Heritage Report because the ramp was not surveyed on the drawings. Montagu Evans assessment is that the 1987 ramp detracts from the architectural interest of the listed building because it is of poor design quality, in red brick, which jars with the yellow stock brick of the original phase. The handrails add visual clutter, both to the southern part of the elevation where the ramp is located and to the front entrance.



2 Conclusion

Inclusive Design can help everyone experience the world around them in a fair and equal way by creating safe and accessible environments for all members of the community, by removing barriers, so that everyone, regardless of disability, age or gender will be able to use the facilities of the scheme equally, confidently, and independently with choice and dignity.

The Haringey Civic Offices are being designed to take into consideration the requirements of best practice guidance where possible, in conjunction with heritage and listed building constraints.

By creating an inclusive internal and external environment, this not only can help to meet the needs of people with disabilities, but as inclusive design is indivisible from good design, it can benefit all users of the built environment to create a sustainable, flexible, and fit-for-purpose approach for Haringey Civic Centre.

At this stage for planning initial stakeholder consultations for accessibility and inclusive design have taken place to ensure staff using the building are involved in the process. As part of the continuing detailed design for the Civic Centre further user consultations will take place where relevant in the design process for Haringey Civic Centre design proposals to deliver an inclusive and accessible project with the aim of meeting good practice guidelines.

Montagu Evans believe that the removal of the 1987 ramp and handrails to the steps would enhance the architectural significance of the listed building, by removing features that detract from and add visual clutter to the front elevation, to reinstate its original clean and open appearance. The removal of the front steps would result in a degree of less than substantial harm to the listed building, given that these were part of the original design and have been identified as being of high significance. The degree of harm would be limited by the fact that the handrails and paving is not original. The replacement of the front steps with a ramp will mean that this part of the building can continue to form part of the arrival sequence to the main reception, while providing inclusive access for all, consistent with the public use of the building and the original design intent for democratic openness. Overall Montagu Evans consider that the proposed replacement of the existing ramp and front steps with a single ramp would enhance the architectural of the listed building.

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