



Access = Design

Royal Pavilion Garden, Brighton

Access Review

Rev 1

22.4.22

1.0 Introduction

This brief access report provides a review of the existing Access Audit report of the gardens carried out in 2019 by Earncliffe plus any additional observations made during a site visit carried out by Access Design on 14th April 2022.

The report aims to summarise key issues to address in the redevelopment of the garden with specific regard to access and inclusion. The report also sets out the standards and guidance relating to access and inclusive design which are relevant. The assessment of the proposal follows the principles of inclusive design, aiming to ensure that the garden will be able to be used as safely, easily and with dignity as practicably possible, by everyone, including disabled people and that the integration of inclusive design elements is the best practicably possible within the constraints of the existing site and the Grade II listed historic setting.

The assessment in this report is based on the Access Audit report dated June 2019 produced by Earncliffe and a site visit. This report does not cover the buildings on the site.

2.0 The Access Audit report and observations

The Audit report is a thorough assessment of the site and covers the relevant wide range of issues required for an Access Audit. This includes physical elements of the site, but also interpretation, wayfinding, management and maintenance issues which affect accessibility.

2.1 Design standards, guidance and legislation

The introduction to the report includes legislation and design guidance that is current and relevant to the scheme. However, does make some reference to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) alongside reference to the Equality Act 2010. It should be clarified that the DDA no longer exists and that the provisions of the DDA were incorporated into the Equality Act 2010.

Additional guidance which may be relevant and useful to the design team regarding access, are two free publications by Historic England:

1 - Easy Access to Historic Buildings (2015)

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/easy-access-to-historic-buildings/heaq010-easy-access-to-historic-buildings/>

2 - Easy Access to Historic Landscapes (2015)

<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/easy-access-historic-landscapes/>

Both documents are available free via the links provided and focus on helpful case studies rather than on dimensional criteria, which may be helpful for reference during the design development.

2.2 Priorities

Recommendations in the report are prioritised. These are generally simple priorities broken down into the following codes:

1 – immediate change required

2 – Implement as part of Phase 2 project

M – Implement as part of ongoing maintenance/ renewal

Op – operational or management policy change

T – Training of staff/ volunteers

The vast majority of the priorities provided are “2” and recommended to be implemented as part of the current development phase. Some recommendations do not go into detail but simply state that “this will be addressed as part of the Phase 2 project.” It is clear that the auditor was party to the design proposals of that Phase 2 scheme at the time and therefore details were not added in the report.

It should therefore be ensured that any access improvements provided in the prior scheme are also addressed in the current proposals. The barriers or issues raised may be solved in a different way, but still need to be addressed.

2.3 Interpretation and signage

All recommendations in the report regarding signage and interpretation were detailed and highly relevant and should be incorporated at the appropriate stage of the scheme. Seek further advice at appropriate design stage.

2.4 Entrances and path routes

Recommendations in the report refer to the Ffk scheme but do not include detail as it formed part of the improvement scheme. Most comments are about visibility of garden entrances, deteriorated surfaces and safety. It should be ensured that all entrances in the current scheme are clearly identifiable on approach, particularly with regard to the entrances located between street benches/leaning benches.

Orientation and wayfinding information is lacking at each entrance, and it is recommended that the signage strategy is reviewed and upgraded throughout the gardens to make it clear, consistent

and provided where needed. This could include information at and on approach to the entrances as well as through the gardens.

While the report includes information about path widths and maintenance, it makes very little reference to path gradients. Many of the gradients of the paths just inside entrances and in the centre of the lawn area are as steep as 1:9; 1:10 in places and where the gradient is 1:12, it is for lengths greater than the recommended 2m between level landings. These gradients along with appropriate level resting areas should be addressed as part of the design. Ideally path gradients would be less than 1 in 20 throughout to allow easy and convenient access for everyone.

The report did not make mention of cross fall. This is quite marked in places which can cause problems for wheelchair users and people with difficulty walking and it is recommended that the cross falls are as shallow as practicably possible and no more than 1:50.

Path widths are mentioned throughout with recommendations to increase to 1800mm (2000mm preferred) to allow two wheelchair users to pass. It should be noted that in some areas it may be appropriate to have narrower paths to be in keeping with the scale and nature of the garden area. In these cases, passing spaces would be required. Advice should be sought as the design progresses.

At time of site inspection, it was noted that the path running from New Road entrance 1 down past the Western Lawn towards the North East Lawn is a major route for people cutting through from Old Steine/Church Street Entrance 6. A significant strip of the Western Lawn was worn down on that path edge, presumably due to pedestrian traffic levels. It is therefore recommended that this path is widened to correspond with this usage, and maybe wider than the 2m minimum recommended for two wheelchair users to pass.



The report mentions drainage grilles in the paving being a hazard or barrier. One recommendation suggest drainage slots of 5mm maximum. However, it should be noted that 5mm is unlikely to be adequate to enable drainage and would be easily blocked. BS8300:2018 Part 1 recommends a maximum 13mm drainage slot or drainage holes with a maximum 18mm diameter.

2.5 Seating

There is seating serving the café and a few metal benches in this area but very little other public seating provided in the gardens. It is recommended that seating is provided at suitable locations throughout the gardens to allow people to rest and enjoy the setting. Seats should have armrests and backrests and be at an appropriate height.

2.6 Pond area

Improvements to wheelchair user access in the pond area are mentioned in the audit report. It was noted that there is no visual contrast or tactile warning of the changes of level at the edge of the ponds and it is suggested that this be addressed in the improvement scheme.